NAN AT CAMP CHICOPEE

· MYRA SAWYER HAMLIN ·

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NAN AT CAMP CHICOPEE.

"NAN."

NAN AT CAMP CHICOPEE;

OR,

Nan's Summer with the Boys.

BY

MYRA SAWYER HAMLIN.

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TO

MY DAUGHTER LOUISE,

AND HER FRIENDS,

RUTH AND CLARE,

WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT HAS HELPED ME TO WRITE
THIS LITTLE STORY FOR OTHER
GIRLS AND BOYS.

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NAN AT CAMP CHICOPEE.

CHAPTER I.

IS THIS LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER?

"QUICK, Robbie, get up and dress! Herbert has a high fever and is out of his head! We have to go for the doctor as fast as we can."

"Go for the doctor? You! Me! Nan!" Boys always, and girls often, say *me* for I on occasions of excitement despite the best of drill in Lindley Murray, and Robbie was too nearly asleep to be conscious of grammar or the fact that his fifteen-year-old sister stood, dressed in sailor suit, reefer and cap, holding a lantern before his camp-cot. The lantern she swung impatiently to and

fro while she tapped her foot impatiently to emphasize her command.

"Robbie, you must get up at once. There is no one else to go with me to the village!"

"Go for the doctor? Why, it's pitch dark. Hear the wind too. Why, we can't. Call the fellows over at the island. I am afraid to go on the lake at this time of night."

"Call the boys at the island?" Nan scornfully rejected the suggestion. "Yes, and how much time we would lose in getting them started. Here I am, helping you as fast as I can, and how long you have been about it! Call them indeed! They would turn over and go to sleep; and there is Herbert, his foot all green, his head clean crazy, Mamma afraid of blood-poisoning, and Marian crying her eyes out."

Nan herself was very ready for the emergency, with erect, proud figure, cour-

"QUICK ROBBIE, GET UP AND DRESS!"

ageous, determined mouth, a head set like Diana's on a pair of shoulders broad enough to bear the weight of all the burdens of her sex. There was so little weakness about the face, that one might easily believe it but a trick of the lantern to discover traces of tears on the dark lashes that shaded the deep-set blue eyes.

Nan had, however, been crying, for a girl of fifteen is only a child, even though she have no fear of a dark night that wrapped the water thoroughfare in fantastic shadows. She had not been crying from any fear of danger to herself in the journey before her, but from that nameless terror which comes to the strong in face of physical suffering. She would rather, far rather brave the unknown dangers of the elements outside, than stay within and listen to the cries of the poor sick man whom her mother and sister watched. But that weakness she could not expose to Robert, this young

brother of twelve, and so the poor boy had to endure the somewhat brusque impatience that was often Nan's safety-valve for emotion.

"Oh! Robbie, can't you hurry a little? Never mind your necktie, button up your reefer. Suppose that Herbert should die before we could get to Chicopee and bring the doctor back? Sister Marian would be a widow!"

"Now, how could she be a widow when she isn't married yet, and won't be for a month? Who is crazy now?" the boy said, exulting in scoring a point against his level-headed sister, before whom he now stood fully equipped (though minus such superfluities as necktie and hair-brushing) for any undertaking whither this same sister might lead.

Nan had no time to rebuff this sinister reflection on her own mental soundness, for their mother, pale and heavy-eyed from

watching, came in to kiss them both and say: —

"My brave children, you know I would not let you go, if I did not fear the worst, but Herbert is certainly very ill. Harold is in charge of the camp in your father's unfortunate absence. But even now Nannie, would it not be better to call some one from the camp island? — for the lake looks so rough, the wind is high. You would not lose more than half an hour."

"Yes, but half an hour might lose us Herbert. No mother dear, I am equal to it. Can't you trust me? My little 'Worry' will carry us safely over. Why I have handled her in much worse weather than this by day. Am I afraid of the dark? Robbie will hold the lantern, and you can see its rays till we get across. Trust me, little mother."

Nan put her arms protectingly around her mother, for she was half a head taller, and

kissed her tenderly, then ran impetuously out into the night, swinging her lantern to light her to the waterside, where her little boat was moored by a twenty-foot rope, which she pulled deftly in, saying, —

"Here, Robbie, hold the lantern higher, so that I can untie the boat." As they pushed off from the shore, she sent an "all 's well" back to the little mother in the doorway, and the words from a well-beloved ballad flew into Nan's brain.

> "The water wraith was shrieking,
> And in the scowl of Heaven each face
> Grew dark as they were speaking."

She checked them before they reached her lips, seeing that her young brother looked pale with fright, and the lake, their dear friend on happy summer days, was now dark and dense with a thousand midnight foes. The distance, scarce a mile, seemed to stretch into limitless torture for

the imaginative boy, and even when with strong, untiring exertion the sister had nearly compassed the distance, the shore loomed darker and blacker still. Innocent shadbush and sumach nodding to their own shadows cast by the lantern, took forms of threatening or beckoning brigands to poor Robbie, and the grating of their own boat on the pebbly beach, the grinding of victims' bones, which threw the boy into a chattering chill.

But Nan, with her practical, healthy touch, brought him back to reality by sounding the great ferry bell that hung over their heads. When its clangor broke the silence Nan gave voice to her favorite ballad: —

> "A chieftain to the Highlands bound
> Cries, 'Boatman, do not tarry,
> And I 'll give thee a silver pound
> To row us o'er the ferry.' "

"Poor Jerry will look far for his pound

to-night, I fear. If he knew only enough to say: —

"'Now who be ye would cross Lochgyle
This dark and stormy water?'
'Oh! I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this Lord Ullin's daughter.'"

"But no, he will come muttering about the hardheartedness of people in getting an old man out of bed at midnight. Here he comes now. I can hear him interfere just exactly like his old horse."

True to Nan's prediction, the old ferryman came shambling down the hill, muttering to himself: —

"Howly Saints, me old bones! What misery! Bringing an old fellow out of his bed sich o' night. Christopher! An it's ye young ones from the Island! What ill luck's sent ye out this night?"

"Oh, Jerry," said Nan, running to meet him, "we have to get the doctor for Mr. Morton."

"The feller what shot hisself up yonder by the birch woods? Somehow these city chaps don't know when they's well off. Ain't got no call to shoot game. Plenty to eat without fooling along with guns. Has to lay 'em down loaded on rocks, and let 'em go off 'thout no game in sight. Tom-foolery and goin' agin Providence. So he is sick, is he? Your pa off down to Boston too? Now whar was them boys to the camp? Could n't none o' 'em turned out, sted o' sending of a gal and boy like you out this time o' night? 'T ain't nothing less than scan*del*lous!"

During this harangue of Jerry's, uttered in the tone of a soliloquy more than an address, the two were making rapid strides up the hill to the little black house, which had never known a paint brush, where Jerry lived by himself, not counting the companionship of an ancient cat, dog and horse.

Nan considered it wise to ignore Jerry's tirade and to carry her own point more briefly.

"Jerry, I must leave Robbie with you, and ride old Dan as fast as he 'll go to Dr. Smith's."

"Well, you be a plucky one. I 'm thinking old Dan won't run away with you," he chuckled as he led Nan into the shed where the old horse's spare ribs rose alarmingly through the holes in his well-worn blanket.

The girl herself led him out, leaped on his bareback, doubled the halter, and was off, after seizing the lantern from Robbie, and left them both speechless in the door-yard.

They could hear Nan's cheering words to old Dan, which seemed to speed him beyond his wont, for but a few seconds and she was out of hearing and lost in the narrow winding of the country roads. The houses

were few and far between, and no candle or lamplight shone from any.

Nan felt that Dan knew the way, though the poor beast was fairly bewildered by the shapes that her lantern threw across his path. But the way seemed long, though they made the three miles in twenty minutes, and Nan stood at the doctor's door as the clock struck one.

A country doctor, living in a peaceful village, far from tavern brawls and electric cars is not subject to many midnight calls, and the good man was as amazed to see Nan sitting on old Dan, as Jerry had been to see her at the ferry-slip.

"Why, Anna, my child, what is the trouble? Is the mother ill? Something very serious?"

"Herbert — Mr. Morton, you know — who hurt his foot, is delirious. Mother is very anxious; I came as quickly as I could. Please, Doctor, will you come right away?"

"Yes, my child. I'll not keep you waiting; my boy will harness my horse, and you would best take a seat in the chaise and let Jimmie lead Jerry's horse down. You took quite tired out, and no wonder. Here, mother."

He lifted Nan off the horse and led her into the house, as his wife, who had been aroused by the sound of a girl's voice, appeared in dressing-gown at the door.

"I 'll get the child a glass of milk. She looks quite spent."

Nan had felt brave enough until the doctor's wife began to pet her, when the child-heart gave way and she burst into tears. The milk restored her calmness, however, and she was somewhat amused by the garrulous curiosity of the kind-hearted woman.

"Poor young man! He was to have been married so soon, too. I suppose your sister has her things most done. 'T would be real sad to have to put off the wedding.

It 's so unlucky. But maybe 't will be all right in a couple of weeks. Tell your sister I 've known far worse wounds in war-times heal up in no time, and the men off to the front to be shot again or maybe killed. She ain't having her wedding things made in the village? There 's the doctor now. Can't wait a minute, always in an awful hurry. My dear, you 've no idea what it is to be a doctor's wife."

The roads Nan had just travelled seemed more friendly as she drove back over them in the protecting companionship of the kind though silent doctor, and Nan felt almost happy as they drove into the door-yard of the ferry-house.

Poor little Robbie had fallen asleep on a hard chair in the room which served Jerry for kitchen, dining and living room, while the old man, on an equally hard chair, was nodding, with "one ear open" for the sound of the doctor's wagon.

"Here, Jerry, put my horse into your shed, and James will be down with old Dan soon. This young lady rode him such a pace, I thought it best to have him rubbed down and rested awhile," said the doctor as he sprang out of his chaise with that limp of one knee that seems peculiar to country doctors

"She 's a plucky one," said old Jerry, whose admiration for this slip of a girl, who could row and ride as well by night as by day, made him overlook the possible danger to his faithful but broken beast.

When the lantern threw its light a second time across the lake, it brought in sight a small boat rowed by two young men, while a third sat in the stern.

"Ho there, doctor, is that you? Are the children all right?"

"All right, of course, with such a pilot as Miss Nan."

"Halloa, boys," cried Robbie, glad to

have the tension relieved by the friendly camp voices. But Nan exclaimed, —

"Oh, is Herbert worse?" as the three young fellows in red flannel shirts and corduroys sprang ashore. The senior of the three, her cousin Harold, seized Nan by the hands as he answered: —

"No, no worse! But Nan, why did n't you call us? It was very foolish, though brave. The ferry-bell aroused us and we pulled over to the cabin to find your mother almost as anxious about you as Morton. You will be the heroine of the lake, Nan. Won't the boys cheer, though, to-morrow?"

"Oh, don't let them know, Cousin Hal. It was nothing; I was n't afraid, and there was no time to lose."

"Not let them know? Why, Nan, they will be so proud of you. You would n't deprive them of that?"

Harold had taken the oars of Nan's boat, and the other boys were rowing back to

the camp, while with Harold's strong practised stroke, the little "Worry" soon brought the doctor to the little cabin where Mrs. Ratcliffe and her daughter were anxiously watching.

The doctor looked serious when he entered the sick room, but he placed one quiet hand on Marian's as he took Morton's in the other, and said kindly: —

"We'll bring him round all right, my dear."

But it was many hours before the fever was abated, for Nan had called the doctor none too soon, and there was no sleep for any of them till day had dawned. When the sun broke gloriously on the lake, Nan was glad to forget the terrors of the night, and Marian came in to kiss her and say: —

"Herbert is out of danger. If it had n't been for you, we should have lost him. Thank you, Nannie dear; now sleep well. God bless you."

CHAPTER II.

SOME NECESSARY EXPLANATIONS. — A SONG AND A SERMON.

NAN could just remember that winter day when her father came home from his office, dejected and discouraged, and after a long talk with their mother had told them that they were to give up the city home and go to the country to live. It was only in later years that she had fully understood that the change was one of life and death to her father, that it was the physician's verdict that he must leave business cares and the city behind him, and find a home and occupation in the country.

She remembered hearing her mother say, "We have Aunt Anne's house at Chicopee,

which was your grandfather's. It is yours, and everything in it, old yarbs and popcorn, everything that has been in it for a century. We can go up there."

And so, cheerfully, as only mothers can, the dear mother had broken up the city home where Nan and Robbie had been born, and Marian lived most of her life. It was a very narrow, small, city home, in an unfashionable street, but Nan could still recall the heart-broken sobs with which she had taken leave of the little backyard, and the few little sidewalk mates with whom she had skipped rope and played tag.

Marian, from her height of fifteen years, had duly impressed upon Nan that they were turning their backs upon civilization, and going to a vast uncultivated desert, where the lost benefits of city life had no compensating balance.

Marian was of that age where even the narrow life of a small city house, touching as

it did by the very faintest, slenderest cord, the pulsating life of the really great world, seemed to hold advantages to which the simple country existence bore no comparison. She was really the only unhappy one. She had always had many friends through her school life, for she was one of those practical, everyday girls who make no demands upon the ideal in their friends, taking them at their surface value, showing a proper and real interest in their clothes and their little quarrels, confiding the vital facts of her own wardrobe with generous impulse, and keeping up a healthy, commonplace intercourse with a host of commonplace girls. Even now Nan could recall the troop of girls who attended Marian home from school every day of the last month in B. Every day there was a different set, and then there were the Sunday-school and dancing-school intimates, and toward the last there were many tears shed, gifts ex-

changed, promises of eternal friendship and endless kissing.

But to the younger children the novelty more than outweighed the regrets of the change, and six weeks after they had set up their household gods in Chicopee, nothing could have persuaded Robbie or Nan to return to the confines of the city home.

Nothing in their short lives had ever been so absorbing to Nan and Robbie as the construction of the henhouses and the stocking of the chicken farm, which was to give Mr. Ratcliffe his needed occupation, and be in time a source of revenue.

The many adjuncts of modern improvement, incubators and brooding houses were of never ending interest, and they never wanted for friends from the day when an imposing array of boxes was set down by an expressman from the nearest railroad station. Mrs. Brahma, Mr. Plymouth Rock, Little

Cochin China, and their broods were their cherished playmates, and nights and days were spent in counting their chickens before they were hatched.

It was when Nan was ten years old that an important change in the household marked a still greater era in her life than even the leaving the city home. Three boys came to spend the summer at the old homestead. They were sons of some old city friends of Mr. Ratcliffe, and they had been sent to Chicopee to share with Nan and Robbie the pleasures of a country life. These boys were so happy that the next year three more boys applied for admission to the mansion of happiness.

This inspired Mr. Ratcliffe with the idea of having a camp on one of the islands in the lake on which the village bordered.

"It will be a great thing, Mary," the father explained, and all that fall Robbie and Nan went with him and the man of

all work to the woods to select timber for the construction of the cabins and pavilion.

"There will be ten bunks or berths against the wall, so that the boys can sleep high and dry, and a pavilion where we can eat in wet weather. I shall hire boats enough to give the boys a royal outing, and in a few years old Chicopee will be swimming with boys."

That was the beginning of Camp Chicopee. In less time than anticipated, a score of boys were swimming, paddling, sailing about Lake Chicopee in the camp uniform. Little by little the story of those happy summers spread among the city homes, and by the time Nan was a tall, strong girl, Camp Chicopee was not a dream of the enthusiast, but a delightful reality.

For several years Mrs. Ratcliffe remained at the old homestead through the summers, taking care of the "chicken farm," and baking innumerable cakes and pies for the

camp, which were sent out twice a week; but when Nan was twelve years old, a small cottage dignified only by the name of cabin, was built on a tiny island, at the north of the larger camp island. There Mrs. Ratcliffe and her children became the good angels of the camp. That year, too, there were so many boys, big and little, that Cousin Hal and his friend Herbert Morton, college seniors, were constituted camp aids, or "aides-de-camp," as they were called. Cousin Hal had an eye and hand to all the little boys who were too courageous with guns or sailboats. Mr. Morton was the active life preserver, and no small boy was ever known to go beyond his depth or have a cramp under water, without a warning and a rescuing from Mr. Morton.

Yet it was Mr. Morton who had jeopardized his own life by carelessly dragging a loaded gun over a stone wall, while in pursuit of elusive game, thereby giving much

trouble to himself and anxiety to the young girl, who in one short month hoped to be his wife.

For Marian, whose heart had been so broken at leaving her city home at fifteen, at twenty-two had found it whole enough to give into good keeping, and Nan was almost as glad to call Herbert brother, as Harold, cousin, so familiar and dear had both young men become.

These, then, were some of the events that led up to that July evening, when twenty boys, in age from ten to fifteen, dressed uniformly in corduroy knickerbockers and flannel shirts, stood, sat, or lay in various postures before a huge log fire in the pavilion at Camp Chicopee. For under the snows of Mt. Washington, even on a July evening, a log fire is never oppressive, and almost always welcome.

One could see that it was an occasion of importance, for although some of the boys

employed their hands in fashioning, out of birch-bark, souvenirs of the woods to take back to their city homes, and others looked dreamily into the kaleidoscopic embers, there was an alertness in the way they watched Hal, who sat in the centre on the seat of honor, the one armchair, that told it was story night.

That tall boy with the merry brown eyes, who is whittling a canoe, is Steve Whittemore. He was one of the first boys to come to Chicopee; and according to the boys themselves, "Steve thought he owned all Chicopee, lake, village, and woods;" for there was not a spot of the county he did not know and love, where the birds built their nests, and where the Indian pipes lay white under the damp oak loam, where the golden dodder strung its amber thread. He and his cousin Marshall, the boy with the freckled face and merry grey eyes, were the pioneers, and had a certain sense of

ownership in all the treasures of land and water round about.

That thin lad, all eyes and mouth, but with a curious, investigating air which brings him much wisdom, is Jimmie Hale. His boon companions are Howard and Sheldon Crawford, lads of twelve, who are content on the floor, with chins on their hands, and wait for anything that shall turn up. These were the boys who had grown into the camp through early association. The dozen others were new boys of last year and this, who were learning to love the life with a zeal which would soon vie with the older love in intensity. All looked to Harold for a story with eagerness.

"A jolly yarn, please, Mr. Harold," begged some of the youngsters.

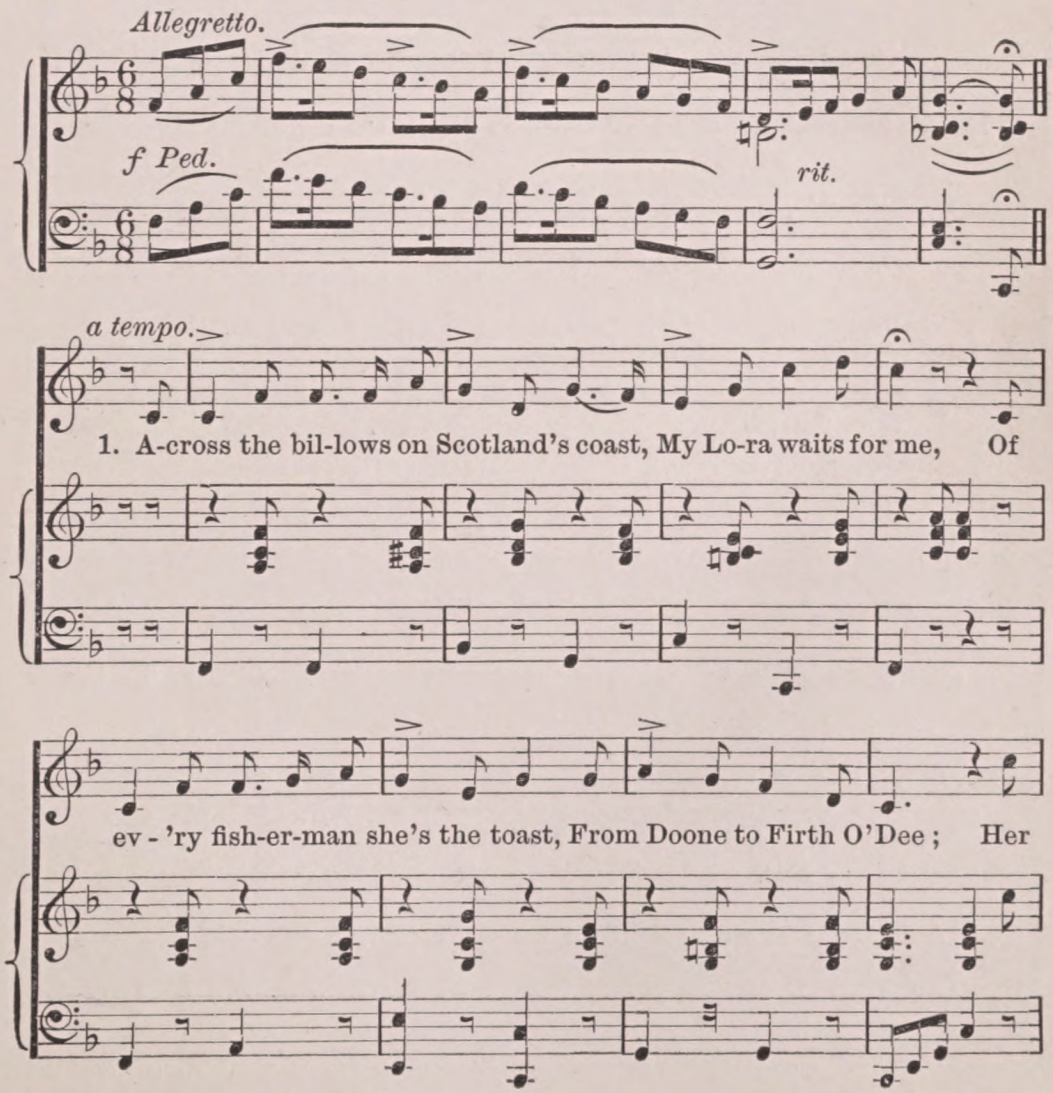
"Don't look over-jolly," said Steve to Marshall. "Something is wrong with Hal."

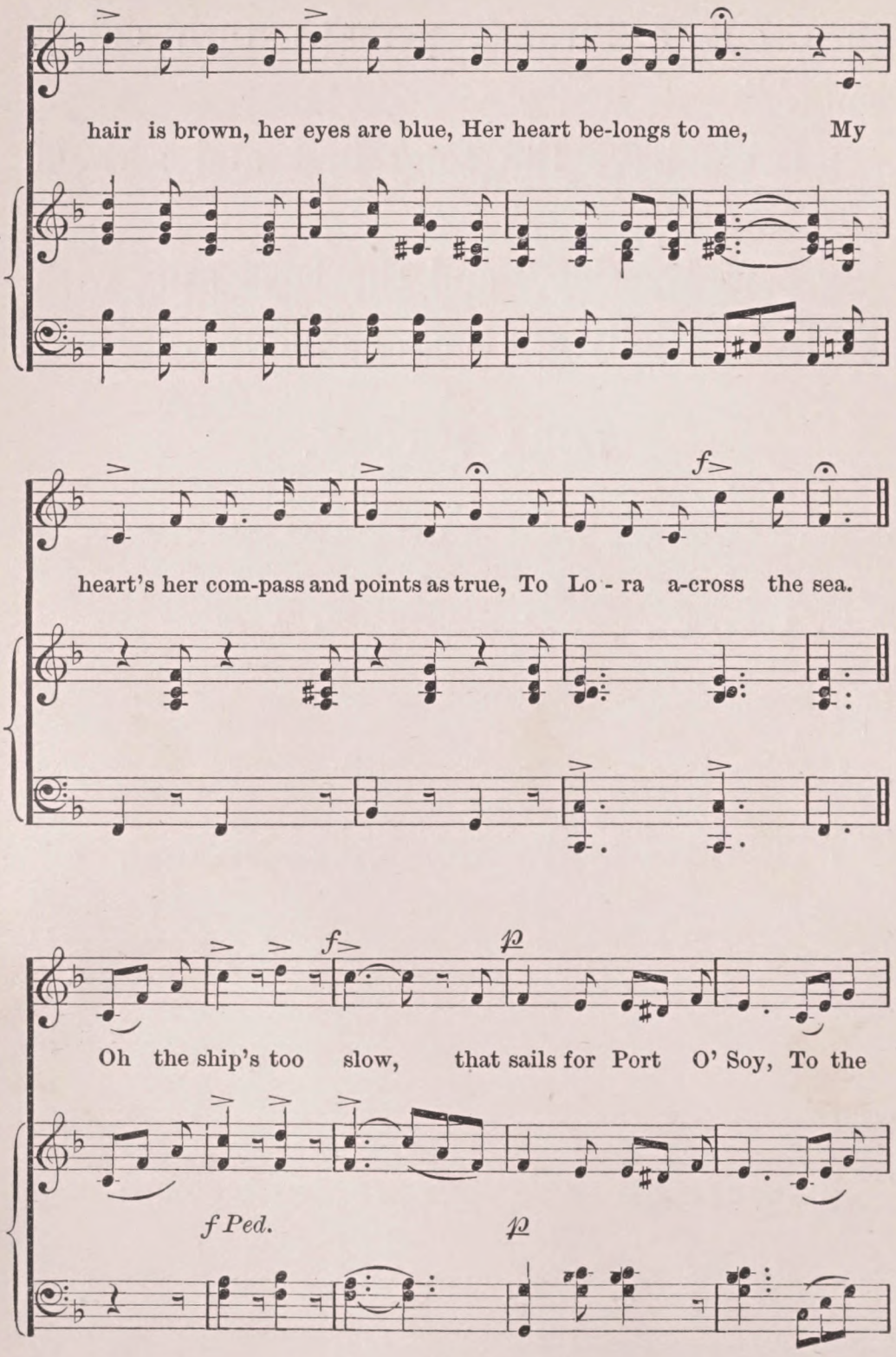
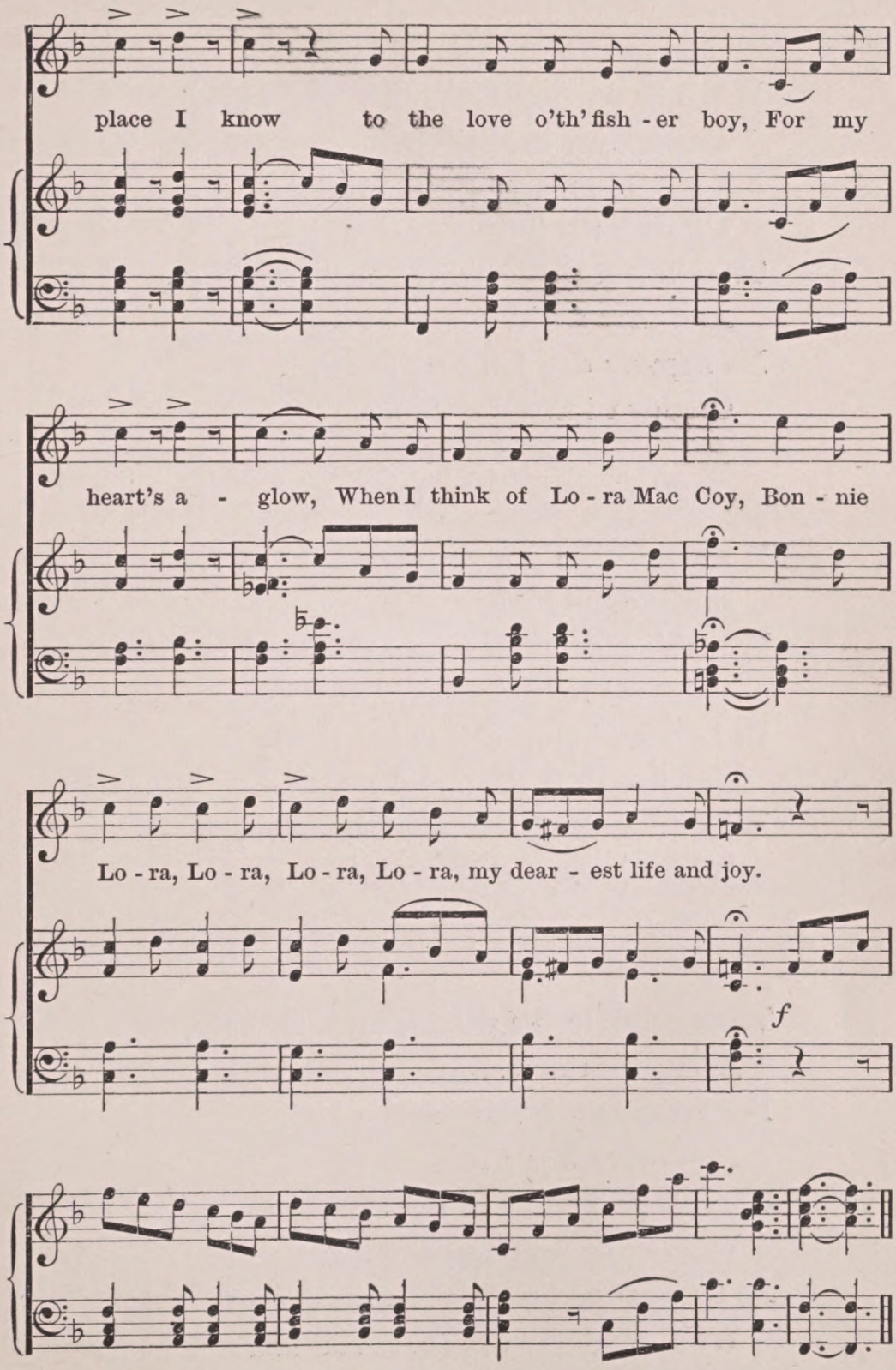
"There is an old saying, 'Perhaps it may

turn out a sermon, perhaps turn out a song.'"

"Let's have the song first and sermon afterwards."

"Lora MacCoy," and the boys sang with a will that jolly sea-song, as follows.

LORA MACCOY.

Allegretto.
f Ped.
rit.
a tempo.
1. A-cross the bil-lows on Scotland's coast, My Lo-ra waits for me, Of
ev - 'ry fish-er-man she's the toast, From Doone to Firth O'Dee; Her


hair is brown, her eyes are blue, Her heart be-longs to me, My
heart's her com-pass and points as true, To Lo - ra a-cross the sea.
Oh the ship's too slow, that sails for Port O' Soy, To the
f Ped.

place I know to the love o'th' fish - er boy, For my
heart's a - glow, When I think of Lo - ra Mac Coy, Bon - nie
Lo - ra, Lo - ra, Lo - ra, Lo - ra, my dear - est life and joy.
f

2.

When heavy nets make the fishers glad,
  There 's joy in that for me,
For she 's to marry me soon, my lad,
  I 'll own my boat, you see,
They 'll call the bans, to church we 'll go,
  And then we 'll married be,
No happier day I 'll ever know,
  Oh, joy of that day to me.

3.

If hauls are light and fishers are sad
  In the empty sea,
We took each other for good or bad, —
  What for light nets care we?
In Lora's window shines her light,
  Our hearth is clean and bright,
Where Lora's kisses are all my own,
  With pipe and a glass at night.

4.

Then drink to the fisher's love my boys,
  Away with fancies sad,
For every laddie must find a lass,
  And every lass a lad.
There 's naught in all our stormy lives
  Where e'er we chance to roam,
As true as the hearts of fishers' wives
  Who watch till the boats come home.

And here 's the sermon — "Well, boys, in the first place, I must thank you for your good behavior to-day,when it was so necessary for me to remain with poor Morton. I can doubly thank you for giving up your practice for the sports, which I know was hardest of all."

"Three cheers for Mr. Harold! Hi! Ki! Yah!" burst from twenty lusty voices, as all sprang to their feet and swung their arms enthusiastically over their heads after the camp fashion of applause.

It was some minutes before they were settled again into listening attitudes, the fire replenished and the bulletin from the cabin received from the lookout boy.

"All right, blue light."

"If our sentinel had been called on duty last night, boys, I should have no story to tell, for my brain refuses to conjure any imaginary tales, and I am going to point a moral.

"Jimmie, who was it said yesterday,

'Girls are no good'? And it was you, Sheldon, who was afraid to go down to the landing alone this evening after dark and haul in the dory."

"Yes, sir, I hate the dark. Nurse frightened me when I was a boy with black bears."

"Did you ever see a black bear about here?"

"Yes; up in Chicopee woods there are bears and wild cats, Jonas says."

"Do n't think you would go up there for me to-night, then, and bring home Dr. Smith?"

The little fellows began to look at one another as though this poor joke of a story was going too far, and then, one by one, they looked up at Harold to read his face.

"Nobody will go; then I will ask Nan to go."

"Nan? That is a joke, Nan to go! A girl, go for us boys!"

"Well, boys, now we come to my sermon.

We all slept last night through the wind, never dreaming that over there at the cabin there was trouble, dark trouble. Mr. Morton lay for hours very near death, and who was it went out in the night, dark and windy as it was, but Nan with little Robbie, frightened and helpless? Yes, that girl who is no good, Jimmie, rowed over the lake to Chicopee, and did not stop there, but on old Jerry's horse skirted the woods where there are those black bears and wild-cats and tramps, till she reached Dr. Smith's house. Now do you think that kind of a girl is no good, boys?"

"Three cheers for Nan!"

"I say Nan 's a brick, and she shall enter for the sports," cried Sheldon.

"So say we all of us, enter for sports. But let us do something regularly splendid to show what we think of her feat," said Marshall.

"We will; something fine."

CHAPTER III.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

IT was nearly a week after Nan's midnight adventure, and there had been very little said about it. Nan felt truly grateful to the boys for making no fuss over it. But she did not know how hard it had been for Harold to suppress any demonstration on their part until Herbert was able to bear it. Morton was now, however, out of danger, and preparations for the sports were to be renewed on the morrow.

Nan was sitting on the veranda of the little cabin, watching the stars come out on the blue July sky and thinking, perhaps, of the contrast between the peaceful calm of the lake and its angry face of a week ago,

when suddenly a strange and startling object shot across the horizon. Was it fish, flesh, or fowl? Had it wings, claws, or horns? Nan's young brain was well stocked with fairy lore, and even at fifteen loved to conjure a little with elfland thoughts. She knew she was fully awake, for behind her she could hear Marian and Herbert chatting softly and contentedly, and there was a not to be mistaken sound of mother mixing bread in the little kitchen. She, however, rubbed her eyes to be sure that the green and red lights were no illusions, but unmistakably real flashes from a brilliant object moving quietly across the lake in the direction of the island.

Cleopatra, the Flying Dutchman, Lohengrin, all the fantastic barges of history floated through her brain before she called: —

"Mamma, Marian, do come quick! What is this coming up the lake? There it is

turning towards us. Can it be coming here?" Nan cried in ecstasy, as the fantastic moving object seemed to float toward their pier until it came near enough to be recognized as a gorgeously decorated and illuminated sail-boat.

From jib to flying pennant a line of brilliant Chinese lanterns were strung, while the gunwale was set with as many more; from the pinnace was strung a dozen flying jacks bearing letters of white, which read:

"Our Lady of the Lake."

As the two girls ran eagerly to the waterside, a strain of Spanish serenade music, played on eight banjos and mandolins floated up to them.

The girls were speechless with amazement, as the boat moored at their landing, though they guessed the secret, when four young cavaliers gaily dressed, much be-

smeared with burnt cork as to mustaches and much arrayed with the missing tail-feathers of certain well-known roosters from the "poultry farm," stepped from the illuminated barge. With a very grand manner, a huge roll of paper highly embossed with much gilt paper and ornate lettering, was presented to Nan by one proud spokesman, who was not easily recognized by reason of feathers and cork.

"We come, your Highness, to present to you letters patent of nobility, also the great Roll of Honor, also the Seal of Bravery. The fame of your great and valorous deeds has spread abroad, and reached the ears of a far people. The Governor of yon Island, whence we come, has sent us as Ambassadors to solicit your attendance at the Water Fête. As a slight testimonial of our regard, we offer you also a short cruise on these noble waters, in our royal barge, OUR LADY OF THE LAKE.

"The night is dark,
But we have lights;
The lake is calm,
But we are timid souls,
And love but quiet pleasures.
Smile upon us, fair lady,
And sail away."

A burst of laughter from the gallant crew greeted this effusive speech of the chief, who was no other than Marshall, well disguised. Harold stepped out to explain to his cousins that the boys had chosen this original form of entertainment for Nan's amusement, thinking that she would enjoy it better than any more sentimental appreciation of her valor.

While the cavaliers descended from the boat their mandolins swung over their shoulders, their smart capes picturesquely draped, made a pretty picture before the brilliant boat. Harold went on: "All joking aside, Nan, on my own part and the part of the boys I have to say that we invite you to

enter into any of the contests you like, at the sports, — swimming, rowing, running, tennis, or baseball."

"Oh, Cousin Harry, thanks, that is the best of all. Boys, the boat is beautiful, — may I really have a sail in her? But I must n't go in this sailor dress with such gay cavaliers. Wait, boys, till I find something in the tableaux-box, if you have left anything in it."

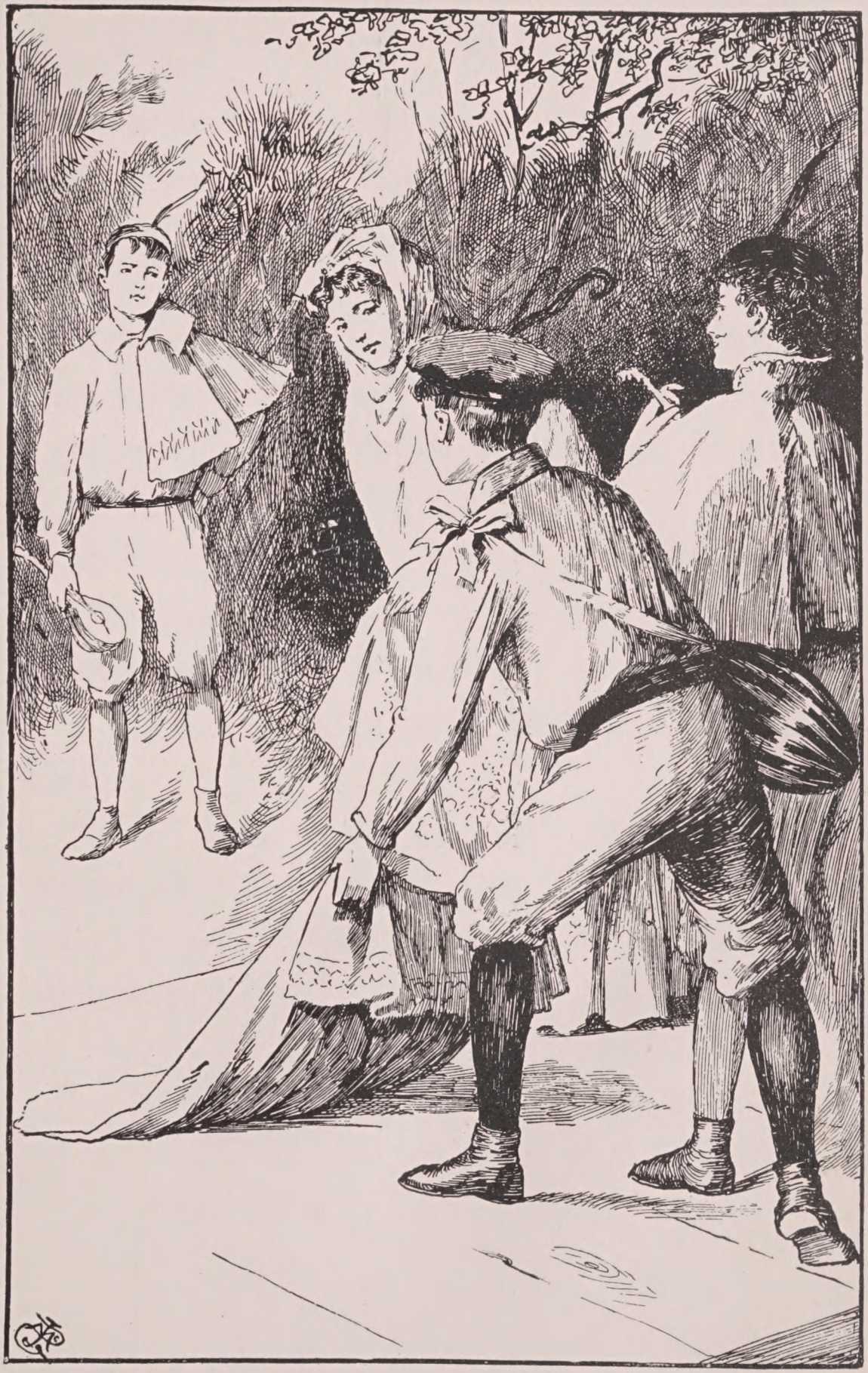
Nan was as quick to catch the spirit of "make believe" as when a child she would "pretend" by the hour. The old finery stored away in the chest, now christened the actors' box, was brought to the island every summer to help in dramatic entertainments. To this Nan rushed, searched its depths hurriedly till she found a corn-colored silk, and lace mantilla, and a string of Roman pearls. The skirt of the old silk went on over the serge skirt, but the bodice, made years before the crusade against cor-

sets, was impossible for Nan, so she had to find a crêpe shawl of the same shade which was quickly folded across her broad shoulders to conceal her sailor blouse. A second more and the lace mantilla was bound with the Roman pearls on her golden brown hair. And Nan was transformed. It was then the boys' turn to exclaim, as she appeared a Venetian lady ready for her gondola.

Harold threw his cape gallantly down for her to walk on as she ran down the floating plank to the boat. "Oh, I would n't be Queen Elizabeth, Harold, for anything, so you need n't play Sir Walter Raleigh," said Nan gaily.

The boys tuned up on the Spanish music again, and it floated sweetly up to the cabin as they sailed away.

Nan's voice supplemented the boys' well, for though it was not a high soprano, which they perhaps needed, it was a round and



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME OF THE BOYS.

"I'LL bet you a dollar."

"Whew! what's that, Sydney? What did Mr. Ratcliffe say about betting?"

"Said we'd forfeit a privilege."

"Well, you will forfeit your walk to the post to-night. I believe it is your night to go for the mail."

"Yes, it is, and I call it just mean, there! What is betting any way? Men bet, and when I am a man I'll bet."

"Then, Mr. Ratcliffe's teachings have done you no good, Sydney; I am very sorry to hear it. You know how strongly he feels about betting."

"I know he does, but I think it's all right; if a fellow has plenty of money, he has a right to bet with it."

"Think a moment, Sydney, if you have plenty of money, have you any right to risk losing it, or making it more by dishonesty, or taking advantage of others?"

"I suppose not."

"Now when you bet, you plan to get some other boy's money away from him, but how do you boys happen to have any money? Mr. Ratcliffe says you have no use for money here, and he does not wish the boys to have spending money at the camp."

"My grandmother sent me five dollars."

"You will have to hand it over to the treasurer till you have need of it. Mr. Ratcliffe's instructions are very imperative about that."

The boy sulkily handed his money to Harold, not daring to do otherwise, as he knew full well that boys had been sent home from the camp, and just before "sports" too, for no reason more grave.

The fact was that Mr. Ratcliffe and his

assistants had resolved to rule money entirely out of camp life. The boys were in general the sons of rich parents, many of them pampered and spoiled in their homes, and sent to Mr. Ratcliffe for moral as well as physical training. He had full authority over them, and under no other condition would take them into the little community. Few boys after the first few weeks failed to fall under the kind yet strict discipline of the Camp, but here and there an obstinate boy held out against all rules, and such boys after one summer were never taken back into the little colony.

Sydney Norcross was one of these boys. An only son of a foolish mother, the petted grandson of a more foolish grandmother, he had been indulged so much at home as to become perfectly intolerable. Mr. Norcross, an old friend of Mr. Ratcliffe, had at last set his foot down in opposition to the feminine element in his household, and at the begin-

ning of this season had written of his boy to Mr. Ratcliffe : —

DEAR RATCLIFFE, — It is very hard for a man to see his only son ruined by indulgence, and I am going to make an appeal to you to save what is good in the boy, if possible.

His mother and grandmother bewail my hard-heartedness in sending him away from home, but I feel that the time has come to change the influences which are spoiling his life.

I hear only the best things of your Camp for boys. It is, above all, self-respecting. You do not pamper the boys with luxury. You make them understand the value of labor. Above all, you allow no money-snobbishness to enter there. If you can teach my boy to respect manliness, to love nature, healthful exercise, and manly sports and work, my debt to you will be unbounded.

Your old friend and well-wisher,

SYDNEY G. NORCROSS.

Mr. Ratcliffe did not write at once to Mr. Norcross to accept the boy. On the contrary, he had a long talk with his wife before answering the letter.

"We have no boys of the kind in camp this year, Mary. Those young cubs, the Vandewaters, were sent home in disgrace last year for persisting in swearing, boasting, and bullying, you know. The boys this year are a clean, manly set of fellows, and I should hate to see them spoiled by one young reprobate."

"Yes, it would be a shame, Horace, especially as the boys are young and impressionable. Those little Prince boys, for example, all under fourteen. What bright little boys they are! — and as their mother is in Europe, we feel more anxious that they should not have any bad influence. Oh, dear! what a responsibility it is to have the moral care of boys. I would rather have sixty girls than six boys to train."

"You think so, my dear, because your girls are good girls, but one vicious girl will do as much harm in the world as ten bad boys, for the girl's influence is more subtle

and not so easily combated. But I must decide about Sydney Norcross, and I think I will put it to the boys themselves. I believe in self-government for them, and that they should have a vote in all things pertaining to their number."

With that argument half-finished, the good professor presented the case to the boys themselves one evening early in July.

"Boys," he said, "I see before me twenty lads who are very dear to me. You all mean to be good boys, but you all have some faults. Few of you are unwilling to have these faults corrected by me and by each other.

"Our camp-life is for self-help, as well as good health, we all know. Now, I have watched some of you boys struggling with your faults manfully for several years. One by one, those enemies have been vanquished, until now I can truly say that each

one of you wears a soul armor, steel, and buckler, ready to cut down envy, uncharitableness, selfishness, and meanness.

"Now, boys, I am not going to preach to you, but I have a case to lay before you. A friend of mine has a son whom he wishes to trust to our care. He tells me frankly that he is a spoiled boy, petted and indulged by the women of his household. Now, this father loves his son as all fathers do, and he does not want to see him grow up mean and selfish, proud or peevish. He asks me to help him, and I ask you if you are willing to help this boy be a better boy, if you will promise me that your influence for good will be greater than his for bad. If, however, you feel that you are not strong enough to resist his influence, say 'no.' We will take a vote upon it."

The vote was all in favor of Sydney's coming, and the boy was taken into the camp-life, not, however, without many mis-

givings on the part of both Mr. Ratcliffe and his assistants.

For a time, while the novelty of the life lasted, the boy was on his good behavior, but little by little, as that wore off, he began to show the cloven foot, and was pretty generally disliked by the boys, who, true to their promise, did what they could to improve his manners and habits. But boys are human, and it was not easy to be good-natured with a selfish, mean fellow, or not to have a little of his influence for evil penetrate the virtue of the whole number. Both Mr. Ratcliffe and Mr. Morton felt badly to find that out of all the boys, Sydney had chosen as his friend young Lewis Prince.

Lewis was one of three brothers, fatherless boys, whose mother, a young widow of great beauty and fine intellect, had intrusted them to Mr. Ratcliffe's care for the summer which she spent in Europe. The Prince boys

were princely by name and nature. Lewis was a very Siegfried in the beauty and daring of his person. Tall and broad, with a wealth of wavy golden hair, there was nothing too difficult for him to attempt, whether to climb a giant tree, dive from a high bridge, play at tennis, ball, or cricket; and it was seldom that he failed to do what he attempted. He was not all muscle either, for a quick intellect well trained by a cultivated mother had made the boy a companion in whom his teachers delighted. In a walk, it was Lewis to whom the little boys turned for the names of the treasures found, birds' eggs, butterflies, or pebbles. At evening, Lewis was ever ready to play at chess or checkers, twang his banjo, or sing a song. His smile was always ready, and his hat always first to come off, when visitors were at camp, and no one ever failed to say: —

"Who is that charming boy? Lewis Prince? No wonder, with such a mother!

No father, poor fellow! Handsome as a picture, and rich as a Duke! Has he any faults?"

Mr. Ratcliffe would laugh and say: "Oh, few boys are perfect, but Lewis has as few faults as any."

His younger brothers were different lads. The second one inherited the delicate constitution which brought his father to an early grave, was sensitive and a little underhanded, a boy to be carefully watched. The third and youngest had his eldest brother's beauty and bravery, but less cleverness. He was more sympathetic and affectionate in nature.

Nan frankly said that she loved all the Prince boys.

"Lewis appeals to my intellect, Harry to my sympathies, and Wolcott to my heart."

The three brothers in turn loved Nan like an older sister and it was to her, their mother had said at parting: —

"They are my three treasures, dear Nan, I entrust them to you. You are to take my place; your father fills a father's place. You, dear girl, pet Harry for me on rainy days when he is dull; romp with Wolcott and let him hug you as tight as a bear at night. As for Lewis, dear! well, Lewis does n't seem to need any mothering, my dear; he has, however, his weak point; he loves appreciation. He will want some one to listen, to look, to understand him. He says people are 'so *stupid*, all but you and Nan, mamma.' So you see, my dear, you will have a good deal of a load to carry."

But Nan was perfectly happy to carry the load, and fulfilled all, more than was expected of her, as far as the Prince boys went.

Harry never missed his mothering on dull days, and when it rained would look for Nan who never failed, unless the storm was too high for boating, to carry him over to

the Cabin Island, where she read to him, made candy, or played dolls in secret with him, all the dismal day.

It was to Nan that Lewis confided the fact that he was writing an epic poem, and it was on Nan, Wolcott bestowed secret kisses.

Nan, however, was very much troubled over the intimacy of Sydney Norcross and Lewis Prince, and was revolving the matter in her mind and puzzling how she should broach the subject to Lewis himself, when Sydney was put under disgrace by Harold's finding five dollars in his possession. It was, alas! Lewis who was at the time his companion. To him Harold appealed reproachfully: —

"Lewis, I am sure you could not have known that Sydney had money."

The handsome boy looked with flashing eye and scornful lip at Harold.

"Do you take me for a sneak? Would

I have told on Sydney if I had known? As it happens, I did not know," and he turned and walked away with indignation and wounded pride.

Soon Harold saw him pulling a boat in the direction of Cabin Island, and soliloquized with relief: —

"Well, if he is going to Nan, he's all right; I'll pay my attention to Sydney."

Lewis made a clean breast of it to Nan.

"I was not betting, and I did not know Sydney had any money. If I had, I might have torn the money up or thrown it into the lake, but I would n't have told, you know that, Nan. Why should Harold take me for a sneak?"

"Harold did not take you for a sneak, Lewis, but we can none of us understand why you are so very intimate with Sydney Norcross. He is not your kind of a boy at all. In fact, he is everything that you are not."

Lewis sat thoughtful a few moments, shifting his oars, in the row-locks, nervously, for Nan had met him at the landing and taken a seat in the boat facing him.

"Well, Nan, I suppose it is my weak point. He flatters me. Mamma always calls my vanity my weak point, and I guess it is. Cæsar's ghost! I'll give Sydney a talking to, and then wash my hands of him.

"You see, Nan, he has been telling me that such a fine fellow as I ought not to be under so many rules as the younger boys, that I ought to do as I liked. *He would,* if he were I, and could do what I can, swim and row and dive and play tennis. Oh, well, I ought to have had more sense than let him talk so, and influence me, after my promise to the professor and Harold. Guess old Vanity will have to hide her head for a while."

"That's right, Lewis; help Sydney as

much as you can to be manly, but don't let him persuade you that any of you boys are men enough to do without rules."

"I won't. How about the sports, Nan? Are you going to enter?" said the boy, glad to throw off the burden of a bad conscience.

"Oh, yes, papa says I may enter for tennis and single sculls."

"But not for swimming?"

"No, mamma, does n't wish me to enter for the swimming; there will be so many visitors, and I am the only girl. I suppose I must remember that I am growing up, and another year, perhaps, I may be too much of a young lady to do anything with you boys."

"Pooh! you'd be Nan, just the same, and I don't believe you'll ever be too much of a young lady to have a good time up here. Get your boat out, and I'll pull a race with you round the island. You know my boat is going to pull against the crew from Little Neck."

"But those boys are sixteen and seventeen years old, Lewis."

"I know it, but we'll beat them. You ought to come out and see our stroke. I've trained the boys to do it as well as the Yale freshmen. Are you coming?"

"Yes," said Nan, as she loosened her light boat, pulled easily off from the shore, leaned strongly forward, and sent her boat a length beyond Lewis.

"Ready!" and the two pulled evenly half a mile, till lost to sight behind the island.

CHAPTER V.

A RAINY DAY.

"OH dear, Robbie! what a rainy day!" Nan groaned, as she made her appearance at breakfast on the morning of August tenth, dressed for boating, and not for a rainy day of indoor occupation.

"Yes, my dear," said mamma, pleasantly, from behind the coffee-pot, trying to coax a little brightness to her young daughter's face by showing a cheerful countenance herself.

"We will have to make the best of it, and brighten things up indoors, for it is settling down for a bad storm. I hardly think any one will venture on the water to-day."

Nan took her seat at the table, very

little encouraged by her mother's view of the situation, and Mrs. Ratcliffe turned to her eldest daughter with a cup of coffee and some crisp toast.

"Here, Marian, is Herbert's coffee and toast; will you take his breakfast to him?"

"Not this morning, for here is Herbert himself!" said a voice from the doorway, as a tall, pale young man came in on crutches, looking cheerily around as he hobbled to the table and remarked: —

"I knew the barometer was rather low this morning, and thought I would do what I could to lift the clouds inside. Good, Robbie, another log; that 's a fine fire you have there; glad I got up to enjoy it. Nan, little sister, why so indigo? You look 'deeply, darkly, beautifully blue' this morning!"

Nan made a brave effort to laugh, but the tears sprang to the front instead, as she said: —

"I did want so much to go to the camp to-day, to play tennis and umpire the boys' football. There are only five more days left before sports. Oh, there is papa with Jonas. Perhaps they will take me over."

With one bound and regardless of pouring rain, Nan was out of the house and on the way to the shore, where Mr. Ratcliffe, enveloped in rubber garments, was, with the aid of a fisherman employed about the camp, pulling in a small fishing-dory.

"Papa, papa," cried Nan, from the pier, "are you and Jonas going to fish to-day?"

"Thinking of it," her father called back hoarsely.

"Well, then, can't Jonas take us over to the camp before you start? I want to see the boys; Harry Prince will be looking for me. What are the boys doing to-day?" Nan asked eagerly as her father joined her

on the plank that ran out to the sloping shore.

"Well, the big fellows are going to fish, and the little ones to be amused indoors. Harold has put up the pulleys and trapeze and they are having gymnastics."

"May I go over?" pleaded the girl, as they made their way into the cabin, where the party at breakfast was prepared for their entrance, and Nan's radiant face told that she had gained the desired consent.

"Jonas can take both children over, Mary, if you are willing, for there is not much wind just now, and the boys will be glad to see them," said her father, continuing, as he seated himself before the fire, "No, I have been to breakfast; I will sit by this glorious fire and get dry, while Jonas goes over with them. Robbie, you are a good fireman. It takes a philosopher or a fool; which are you, my boy? There are only three boys at camp whom I can

rely on for a good fire. Well, Herbert, you are doing well; a few more weeks and the crutches can go, I guess."

Mr. Ratcliffe, like many nervous men, had a cordial, genial manner when not harassed, that radiated a cheering atmosphere. The boys loved to bask in his sunshine, and dreaded his frown, so that he had a potent charm for his youngsters. Nan had her father's vivacious geniality, tempered by her mother's phlegmatic composure, so that she was better equipped than either parent in nature's gifts.

Both Robbie and Nan were soon arrayed for the fight with the elements, disdaining umbrellas, which were considered at Lake Chicopee badges of city weakness. A boy who dared to put up an umbrella was severely laughed at, and Nan aspired to do as the boys did, and tucked her long braids well up under the fore-and-aft cap; frizzes she had none, and with feet and

legs well encased in rubber, she could have waded to Camp Chicopee had the lake been shallower. The rain beat down heavily, but they buffeted waves and wet laughingly, delighted to be in the open and headed toward the beloved camp.

Their appearance brought cheers from the group of boys gathered in the pavilion, and "Hi, Ki, Yah! three cheers for Nan!" rang loud and long.

"Now for a good time," cried Harry Prince, who helped to take off Nan's wet "things" devotedly.

"What is going, boys?" asked Nan, looking from one group to the other, and up to Jimmie Hale perched on a rafter above all heads.

"Circus," cried the enthusiastic young gymnast, swinging himself down into the tennis net which had been improvised as a safeguard against accidents.

"Who votes for circus or stories or

candy?" called Harry Prince, confidingly suggesting to Nan his preference for the last.

"Why not all three?" half a dozen boys echoed at once. "Time enough for all; circus first, then candy for refreshments, and stories for rest."

"Yes, yes, goody, goody," screamed Wolcott Prince, the camp infant, kissing Nan enthusiastically.

"Oh, Wolcott's always thinking of sweets. Don't be a baby, Wolcott," said Lewis Prince, coming in with two of the elder boys, arrayed for fishing.

"Well, if I'd known you were coming, I believe I would n't have planned to fish," said Lewis aside to Nan. "What's up?"

"We have n't decided yet. Circus, candy, stories, the boys say."

"We'll be back for the stories with a boat full of fish for dinner, too," the big boys sung out, as in tarpaulins they van-

ished to brave the storm and trap the unwary fish.

"I say, Nan, would you be equal to keeping the peace if I should join the fishermen?" Harold asked, looking longingly at the party which was about to sail off.

"Of course I would; go ahead, Hal. Don't you suppose I can manage these ten boys? What could happen?" said Nan, proudly, looking at the boys who gathered affectionately about her.

"Oh, well, you might set fire to the camp," said Harold gloomily.

"Well, there is water enough to put out a Chicago fire to-day. What else?"

"Somebody might break a leg!"

"Oh, no; Herbert has done that. Lightning never strikes the same place twice. Say rather a head; or we might all put beans in our ears or our noses, like the old woman's children in the story."

"So you might, but I don't believe you

would; guess, on the whole, nothing can happen to you, so I will trust you and be off for a couple of hours. Uncle won't mind. Be good boys, and Nan is Minister Plenipotentiary. Do you know what that means?"

"Ministering Angel," said Harry.

"Good for you, Harry; that is just what Nan is; but my long words mean that Nan has all the authority of her father and myself, and you must all do just as she tells you."

"Course we will," cried all the boys with one voice, and Harold disappeared, shouting to the vanishing fishermen: "Hold on, fellows!"

Then came a transformation scene. Nan's eyes sparkled, and the boys were all poised for action as, with three claps of her hands, Nan sang to a lively measure the old rhyme, known in every nursery: —

"One little, two little, three little, ten little Indian boys,
Ten little Indian boys in a line."

Now this mystic verse is as old as the hills; every baby has had it counted on fingers, toes, and ten-pins for centuries; but Nan's "ten little Injuns" was a game solely and peculiarly a camp institution, and was the signal for a circus frolic.

It began by each boy shouting after the fashion of a round, the line, "Ten little Injuns" and making a frantic stampede for the rafters and beams, which were heavy and bare, making most inviting perches for aspiring youths. The "ten little Injuns" seated on their perches, legs and arms swinging, sat up aloft. At a sign from Nan, a clap of the hands or a whistle, the first little Indian made himself into a tee-totum, spinning head over heels recklessly over the beam, then with skyrocket rapid-

ity, disappearing head downward into the catch-net.

"One went away, and then there were nine.
Nine little Injuns all in a line."

Another clap of Nan's hands and the end man elevated himself to a standing position on the beam, pirouetted on one leg and then on the other, across the beam to an intersecting triangle, whence he hung head down, whistling to the eighth Indian, who sprang nimbly down to a trapeze opposite and seized the swinging boy in his arms while the others sang: —

"Ninth little Injun called for his mate,
He ran away and then there were eight."

Two, however, fell instead of one, and Nan had to call out: —

"Seven little Injuns in a fix,
One ran away, then there were six."

Number seven, who on this occasion was Wolcott, with a broad grin, took a leisurely

walk to a post, and performed the feat commonly known as "shinnying" down the post to the ground. "Bravo for Wolcott!"

"Now six little Injuns all up to tricks!"

Before Nan could finish her line the six remaining boys, with a war-whoop which would have startled Apache or Sioux, leaped furiously into the air, reaching the net in a mêlée. With a creak and a groan the net gave way and left the Indians on a mattress below, yelling frantically, and scrimmaging in true football fashion.

"Here's to the pipe of peace!" called Nan, when playing looked like plaguing.

Without a sound the boys squatted in a circle on the floor with the impassive composure of Sitting Bull. Nan vanished a second, then returned like a fairy godmother, with a huge pan of soapsuds and ten clay pipes. She handed one to each Indian, who proceeded to smoke in peace,

till from each bowl depended a beautiful transparent globe, radiant with all the colors of the rainbow. Each boy's face rivalled in roundness his huge soap-bubble, till Nan declared there was danger of bursting blood-vessels, and she brought the pastime to a close by pronouncing Jimmie Hale's bubble the largest, and giving him the choice of the next occupation.

"Something to eat!" roared Jimmie with the voice of a bass drum.

"We are all hungry," Harry seconded, and there was a unanimous vote for "refreshments."

Nan retired once more to the extension shed, which was dignified by the name of provision room, and produced a huge pan of very large doughnuts.

"Now, catch," cried Nan, tossing a golden brown ring so dear to the hearts or stomachs of all small Yankee boys.

Affairs had reached this point when Nan

became conscious of a strong rising wind, which was already blowing stiffly; her eye trained to watch the wind clouds, saw that the lake was treacherous. About three quarters of a mile from the shore, beating about helplessly, in an ill-controlled fashion, she espied a catboat.

"I wonder who can be in that boat! Surely our boys could handle a boat better than that even in a gale. Robbie, dear, will you run and get papa's field glasses? I must see who is in that boat; they will surely get into trouble. We must keep an eye on them."

The boys were all at the windows in a moment. Robbie brought the glass, and Nan scrutinized in vain. The mist was too heavy for her to discern easily whose boat it was, much less the occupants.

"It looks as though they were two small fellows. They must be some boys from Little Neck. None of our young boys are

allowed to go in the sail-boats alone. But I 'll keep watch."

She had watched but a moment longer when she cried out : —

"Oh, boys, they are going to capsize. They are losing all control. I must take one of the boats and row out."

"I 'll go with you, Nan," said Robbie.

"Let me go, Nan," cried half a dozen boys at once.

"No, boys, remember, Harold left you in my charge. Be good, and stay here with Robbie."

"Get out the emergency case, Jimmie, and Robbie, make up a good fire. We don't know what might happen ! "

Like a soldier or fireman, Nan jumped into her rubber suit, and was down to the shore before the boys could protest. Harry cried a little, but as Jimmie promptly said, "Shut up, baby," he as promptly stopped, and was soon watching intently Nan's

swift, energetic movement as she rowed off into the lake in the direction of the cat-boat, which the wind was now buffeting about like a helpless toy.

Nan had hardly pulled fifty strokes before she was nearly paralyzed by seeing the boat capsize and both boys go into the water. For dear life she pulled, necessarily with her back to the boys, who seemed to be struggling in the water, the one a good swimmer being hampered by the other, who apparently could not swim at all.

Nan was not many minutes in getting near enough to recognize the boys as Lewis Prince and Sydney Norcross, and her heart stood still for a moment, then beat bravely with strong determination to save both boys.

"Hold him up, Lewis, I'm coming," she shouted, and pulled vigorously a few moments that seemed hours, till she gained on them. Lewis was swimming with one

arm, while the other held up Sydney, who was almost unconscious.

"How can we get him in? Here, Lewis, take my hand, I'll hold you up, and together we 'll pull Sydney in."

How they did it, Nan never knew. Sydney sank into the bottom of the boat in a dead faint, but Lewis seized the oars and began to pull.

"I'll take cold if I don't, Nan. Oh, how did you happen to come? If it had n't been for you we should have been drowned; my strength was giving out, Sydney was such dead weight."

"How ever did it happen that you were out in that catboat without Harold?" Nan asked in a dazed way, not answering Lewis's questions.

"Harold was in the dory fishing. You see, we all went out in the catboat; then Harold and Steve got into the dory to fish, and anchored the catboat. We could have

gone in the dory, too, but it was so wet we thought we 'd get under the shrouds. I had n't an idea of sailing off, and Harold said they 'd just troll up and down around the Narrows, back of Dollar Island. All at once Sydney began to pull up the anchor and dare me to sail around Dollar Island. I said your father never would allow us little fellows to handle a catboat, alone. Then he called me a 'Mollie Coddle' and dared me to do it. I thought it looked easy enough, and that I would be back before Harold; but the wind came up and drove us off on another tack, and I could n't bring the boat around, and first thing I knew, she was sweeping down the lake, and the squall came up and pitched us over. Sydney cried like a baby and came near drowning us both. I 'll tell you, Nan, I said my prayers, and God answered them, for he sent you to save me for poor mamma. What would mamma have done, if I had been

drowned? I, whom papa told to take care of her! Poor, beautiful mamma!"

The brave boy broke down and cried; Nan took the oars away and said: —

"Cry away, Lewis dear, if it will do you good; you will want to be brave for the little fellows, they are on the lookout. We must get Sydney into the pavilion, and give him some brandy, and put him to bed, and then send somebody for the catboat."

But as they came in shore, another boat hove in sight at the upper end of the island, and Nan saw with joy that in it were her father and Jason.

"What 's the matter?" her father halloed.

Nan flung out her handkerchief as a flag of distress, and Mr. Ratcliffe hastened to join her. When he saw Sydney lying in the bottom of the boat, and Lewis wet to the skin, he was at a loss to understand what had happened. Nan, however, mo-

tioned him to ask no questions till they had got both boys into the pavilion.

When this was done, however, Sydney put to bed, rubbed and brought back to consciousness, and Mr. Ratcliffe learned the whole story, he was righteously very angry.

"Lewis, you have suffered enough to-day. I shall say no more about it at present, but to-morrow we will talk about this. Now, something must be done to get the catboat in, and Jason and Marshall Whittemore must go out and right her, while I look after these lads. Nan, you must straighten things here, and when the other boats come in, we will take account of damages.

"My daughter, you were a brave girl, and I feel sorry that such foolhardy boys should have put you in such peril."

But Lewis was no coward; he was ready for his punishment.

"Oh, Mr. Ratcliffe, that is what troubles me most. I don't care what you do to me, if you will but let me stay here till mamma comes. Whip me, put me on bread and water, or cut me from the sports. I deserve anything for risking Nan's life."

Lewis's young face was wan and white, but far from weak, as he stood before Mr. Ratcliffe as bravely as any young Spartan. Nan was too overcome at first to speak; but looking at Lewis she could but remember how bravely he had kept Sydney from drowning, how manfully he had taken the blame.

"Papa, dear, you do not know how much Lewis has been through; how he kept Sydney from drowning. Oh, papa, don't punish him; he is not to blame; please forgive him, papa, for my sake, and for his mother's."

Nan burst into tears and threw her arms

about her father, sobbing out all the pent-up agony of the last hour.

"There, there, darling, for your sake, Lewis shall go scot free. Here, Lewis, if you are to be anybody's prisoner, you shall be Nan's. She shall do what she thinks best with you," and Mr. Ratcliffe patted the boy kindly on the back.

"Thank you, sir; but you won't be too hard on Sydney?"

"Oh, well, as to Sydney, I shall have to hand him back to his father. I can't do anything with him," said Mr. Ratcliffe, hopelessly.

"Let me have him too, papa. He shall be my prisoner at the cabin for a few days, till he is well, and perhaps I can do something to reform him. Poor fellow! he has had an awful experience this afternoon."

"Terrible lesson, certainly. Here come the others. A fine story we have to tell them. I am afraid Harold has to come in

for his share of the blame too. But after all, perhaps I am deserving of some blame also myself. Guess I can't be too hard on Harold. We must be thankful that it is no worse."

CHAPTER VI.

SYDNEY'S PUNISHMENT.

IT so happened that the consequences of the mishap fell most heavily upon Sydney Norcross, and although no one would have wished him to have so severe a lesson, it proved to be the one thing needful to cure him of not only one but many of his bad ways. True to her trust, Nan had him transferred to the cabin, which, indeed, served generally as infirmary for the camp boys, Mrs. Ratcliffe taking all the sick boys under her mother's wing.

Sydney, never a strong boy, suffered from nervous shock and a severe cold so that he was a subject for nursing for some days. Unfortunately, his parents had just started on a driving tour through the mountains, plan-

ning to reach Lake Chicopee at the time of the regatta, and it was impossible to reach them by letter or telegram for several days. Nan, as well as her mother and sister, had her hands full with the querulous boy, who had never been crossed in his life, and when sick had been accustomed to be waited upon by fond parents, doting grandmothers, and paid domestics. The "roughing it" had never suited the boy, even when well and most amused. He could never adapt himself to the lack of service, and had bullied the little fellows into waiting upon him more than any of the seniors were aware of. He had easily shirked all the smaller duties by exhibiting an awkwardness, which so enraged the more dextrous boys, that, rather than wait for Sydney to cut a birch stick, any one of them would have preferred to level a tree.

Established at the cabin in Morton's place, Sydney was at first so grateful for the fem-

inine care that he forgot to be peevish, and Nan was so truly sorry for the boy that she devoted herself to his amusement for two days, playing games with him, reading aloud, or singing, as suited him best.

But with convalescence came back querulousness, and the boy would have exhausted the proverbial patience of Griselda.

He proved too much for even Nan, who at the end of the third day, when Sydney had worried her to death by his fretfulness, broke out in righteous indignation.

"Sydney, you are a perfect try-temper. I am sorry I ever attempted to be kind to you. I can't see how any boy can be so selfish as you are. If you were my boy I would feed you on bread and water for a month. Here mamma has cooked all her nicest dishes for you. I have brought you cold water, hot milk, lemonade, tea, coffee, every kind of a drink you fancied, almost every half hour for the last three days. We

have all read to you till we are hoarse, and then you have the ingratitude to say, 'This is a beastly hole; there is nothing fit to eat or to drink.' I just wish I were your father for a half an hour. I would give you a good sound thrashing. Here you have gotten yourself into this box by your own wilfulness, and you have never had a twinge of conscience. I tell you, Sydney, unless you turn over a new leaf you will be a bad, vicious, disagreeable man, whom no one will love or care two straws about. You think because you have money you can buy friends. You can't. You will buy servants and flatterers, but you will never have a friend in the world."

Nan's blue eyes were as black as coals, her lips were white with anger, but there were two bright spots on her cheeks as she stood facing the boy, who lay on the couch, more astounded and ashamed than he had ever been in his life. Neither of the two

saw the figure of a man in the doorway, nor was aware of the presence of Sydney's father, until a voice almost as hoarse and moved as Nan's broke the silence which followed, by —

"You are a brave girl, Nan, and it grieves me to say to my son that you speak most bitter truths. Oh, Sydney, can it be that you have repaid these kind people by ingratitude of words and heart? My son, for my sake, and as a consequence of this awful experience which might have cost you your life, turn over a new leaf, be true, unselfish, and manly."

Most strangely, it seemed to Nan, for Sydney, the boy turned his face to the wall and wept contritely, not angrily but remorsefully, sobbing in broken words: —

"Papa, I have been a pig, a brute. I don't know how I could have been so brutal to Nan, for she has been an angel to me. If anything can make me a good boy, it will

be what she has done for me. I don't believe she was ever angry with one of the boys before, or had reason to be. If Mr. Ratcliffe will keep me, I will turn over a new leaf."

"No, my boy," said the father, seating himself beside Sydney, and stroking the boy's head lovingly and pityingly. "I cannot ask Mr. Ratcliffe to keep you any longer this summer, but perhaps this is the beginning of a change, and another year this good Nan will see the effect of her wholesome advice."

On the morrow, Sydney Norcross left the camp to return to his mother and grandmother, but the experience of that week was the turning-point of his life, and he lived to thank Nan for her wholesome truths.

CHAPTER VII.

PRESIDENT POSS.

SLEEPING at the bottom of the heart of every American boy is the hope and ambition to be President.

Incidentally, he may desire knowledge and wealth, but through a vista of accomplished aims he can always see that goal which is possible to every American boy — the Presidential chair. *President in posse* was to the Chicopee lads a distinction which took on a royal color on certain Saturday evenings during the summer days of camp life, and in recognition of this goodly ambition, there had been formed among themselves a society which called itself President Poss, familiarly P. P.

The President Poss was trivial in name

only. In fact, it was a body composed only of those boys whose work had stood the test of examination by a faculty composed of Mr. Ratcliffe, Mr. Morton, and Mr. Harold, and voted upon by a number of delegates, chosen from the various departments of camp government. These departments had been formed with a view to making the camp self-governing and numbered: a police force, whose duty it was to oversee and control the work of all the other departments; a boat crew who answered all the ferry calls from the shore, and acted as expressmen and messengers, and attended visitors; a commissary who ordered and provided and superintended the preparation of meals; the health department, whose work extended throughout the whole island, burning and burying refuse and disorderly rubbish, and reporting untidiness or uncleanliness of any description; the athletic department which regulated the time and

manner of exercise, organized the crews, the ball teams, and the tennis tournaments; the social departments, which provided amusements for the evening hours, musical, dramatic or narrative.

To become eligible for the rank of *President in posse*, the candidate must have served one week in each of these divisions, and have an unimpeachable moral record. From Cousin Harold in his book-keeping office, to little Sheldon on the boat landing, doing his share of scrub work, by cleaning knives, every boy felt that this was a day of reckoning and of rewards. Some of the boys were glad that the day had come, as they were eager for a change of work, but more of them were anxious to have their work found creditable and meritorious.

The four boys who had charge of the commissary department wished to have to-day's dinner the best at the least cost of any dinner during the summer. The boat

crew who served as expressmen were striving to make the best despatch of the season. The police force, who did what the boys termed the "tall looking on," were more vigilant than ever in enforcing discipline and order.

Cousin Harold at his books had a daily record of each boy's work, and knew pretty well who should merit the presidential honor, but he knew also that the popular vote sometimes set aside the candidate of the books.

"It is going to rain to-night. It won't be an open Poss," said Jimmie Hale, viewing the weather like an old tar, as he pulled in the boat with the last load of Sunday provisions.

"Rain sure," said his mate, Ernest Lovering, turning to look toward the west where a grey cloud was settling over the lake.

"Well, the pavilion is always cosy enough

in wet weather. There goes that ferry bell again. What is wanted over at the shore now? I say, Hal," Jimmie added to that young man, who walked to the landing to assist in unloading and to make an inventory of the cargo.

"I think we fellows should be let off this time. Six times to the shore in one morning is too much, when it is for business, not pleasure. Boat crews are n't electric machines. Give some o' the others a job. It is just some of old Jerry's tomfoolery, I will be bound. Wants to know which way our weather-vane turns, or if we have some St. Jacob's oil for his rheumatism. Don't see how such a chump as Jerry has sense enough to eat. Halloa, Nan, where are you bound? Don't you want to take a turn over to the village?"

Jimmie hailed Nan, whose little boat shot round the bend, headed for the camp.

"I was just coming over to offer my help,

you boys seem to have been awfully busy this morning and I uncommonly idle. Anybody want to go? Jump in Wolcott, Infant, if you have finished your task!" Nan added as she pulled her boat up to the floating wharf, where Wolcott Prince was seated beside Sheldon, a pile of knives, brightly scoured, lying between them. Determination and pride were on both faces, and Wolcott sprang up, flourishing a knife in one hand, and a flannel rag in the other.

"Look at these knives, if you don't think *we* can do anything. Three dozen of them. Aren't they bright, though? I'd like to see any of the other little fellows beat that. Guess police won't have anything to say to us to-night about shirking."

The little fellow was a picture of cherubic beauty, and Nan always found it hard to resist a temptation to kiss him, in spite of the Spartan rules which made it a weakness

THE CAMP INFANT.

beyond the territory of Cabin Island. His blue eyes danced merrily beneath his yellow curls that lay in soft waves on his broad forehead, now wet with the heat of labor. His tanned little cheeks were flushed with pride and excitement, and his sturdy little figure made him worthy the pet title of "Camp Infant," bestowed on Chicopee's favored junior.

In point of age, Sheldon was more entitled to the office, for he was a few months younger than Wolcott, neither of them having reached that turning corner of babyhood, the eighth birthday, and Sheldon had for a brief season enjoyed the favors and petting which belonged to the Camp Infant, until it was painfully discovered by those in authority that Sheldon could not, would not, or did not always tell the truth, whereon he was promptly deprived of his title, and put on his honor for one month, to regain it by good behavior.

From the day of the last President Poss, when Wolcott was crowned Infant at the expense of Sheldon, the little king had never relaxed his efforts to help Sheldon overcome his habit of "telling whoppers," and his generosity in attempting to restore his friend to favor had won for him much approval from his seniors.

Nan understood the friendship of the two little lads well enough to know what the result would be when she extended her invitation to Wolcott, who looked at his bright knives, then at Sheldon's, and then beyond to his friend's still unburnished number. But Sheldon knew what was in Wolcott's mind, and though it cost him an effort, still, looking ruefully at his knives, he said manfully: —

"Never mind, Wolcott; you go along. You have done some of mine, and these are all mine to finish."

But Wolcott was not to be outdone in

generosity, so he made a bold dash at Nan's good heart, saying: —

"Can't you wait a minute, Nan, and take us both? If I'll help Sheldon, he will get through quicker, and we can both go."

"But I didn't ask both," said Nan, laughing.

"Well, then we won't either of us go, 'cause Sheldon has worked just as hard as I have," said Wolcott, sturdily.

"That's a good friend, Wolcott. You both hurry up, and Sheldon shall go too."

Soon the two little lads were seated in the stern, and Nan's boat, christened the "Worry" because of the anxious hours its early use had given her mamma, was speeding towards the opposite shore.

"I say, Nan," said Wolcott, when they were well under way, "do Presidents have such a lot of work to do, — scrubbing knives and sweeping up and brushing clothes and

singing in choirs? Awful lot of work to be President!"

Nan laughed her merry laugh, which all the boys, little and big, loved, for it brought to light two deep dimples that seemed to hide no one knew where, when her face was in repose, and she answered: —

"What do you think about it, Sheldon? Do you think the President of the United States spends his time doing knives, and such things? I am afraid the affairs of the country would be in a bad fix. No, boys, papa does not mean you to think that to be great men, you must all do scrub work. It is only that all great men have had to learn to do some kind of small work well, and the better work you do as little boys, the easier you will find it to do the big work when you are big boys. Do you think Cousin Harold and Marshall don't have any work to do because they are police, and only keep watch over you little

boys? They have all taken their turn at your kind of work, and know how to do it a good deal better than you."

Nan paused for breath and looked behind her to see the shore near at hand, and old Jerry standing under the huge bell with a basket on his arm.

"Halloa, Jerry, what is wanted? The boys have been over so many times, they thought they had everything."

"Well, they wuz in such an all-fired hurry to make time back to the island, they just went plump off an' lef' this yer basket o' eggs. Guess yer ma 'll want 'em 'fore Monday. 'Haste makes waste.' Never knew it fail."

"That 's so, Jerry; but to-day 's a great day. The boys were in a special hurry. We elect a new president to-day," and Nan seized the big basket in her strong arms and set it in the bottom of the boat.

"Elect a president! by Godfrey! Not

for sure? Well, that beats all. How I do lose my reckoning. I was just a-thinking 'twan't election till another y'ar. How I doos forgit! I recollect whan I was young, there was a President went to Washington from these parts, Pierce, his name. Great times them was. And how you goin' to elect a president?"

"This time it is only President of Chicopee Camp, Jerry, not of the United States. We make our own government over there, you see, and choose our own officers."

"So, so; well you do most everything over there, 'cept make cider and dig potaties. Tell your pa I can help Jonas up to the farm any day next week."

"All right, Jerry; will you push us off?"

"Let us row back, Nan, won't you?" Sheldon pleaded as he and Wolcott began to clamber to the bow seats.

"Steady there," called Jerry, holding in

the "Worry" till the little fellows were seated, and Nan had seized one oar as paddle, to start the little craft straight in her course. The little lads each took an oar and pulled, with some crab-catching, a fairly good stroke.

It took them some minutes to fall into time, then Wolcott burst out with enthusiasm : —

"Why don't they make you president, Nan? We little fellows will vote for you."

"Oh, girls are n't ever presidents."

"Well, they are queens, and queens are a lot greater than presidents; they chop off men's heads as easy as lightning. Lewis read all about Queen Mary and Queen Bess and good Queen Vic. If you can't be president, why not have a queen for a change? I 'd sooner vote for you than Lewis. Some of the fellows are going to vote for Lewis. You just cut in and get queen, Nan. Then we little fellows could

have our say once in a while, about dinners and swimming."

"Oh, yes, Wolcott, when I am Queen of Chicopee, I'll make you little boys my ministers, and we will have a castle on Cabin Island, and a gingerbread dining-hall with a chocolate roof, and windows all framed in peppermint sticks."

"And no dish-washing nor knife-scrubbing," chirped Sheldon.

"No; we will say, 'Ho, minions,' and a new set of dishes will come up, and we shall never know what became of the old ones."

"That will be jolly; oh, do be queen, Nan! We'll vote for you to-night."

"You'll have to vote for the candidate, so be good boys and don't 'bolt the ticket,' as Lewis says. Here we are! Back water, Sheldon."

The promise of cloudy weather was fully realized, and the Poss evening was ushered in by a drizzle, drozzle rain which the boys

did not hesitate to call "very nasty" indeed, although in general they cared no more for weather than any other class of amphibious animals who spend as much time in the water as on land.

But the "Poss" was in some sort a festival, and a festival night was always better for starlight without.

However, there was no repining, and the lads worked busily over the construction of an enclosure which was known as the "Ladies' Gallery," where Nan, her mamma and sister should sit in state, embowered in hemlock boughs and bunting drapery. Two mysterious structures at a distance resembling sentry boxes, upon near inspection very suggestive of packing boxes, were ambitiously christened "Ballot Booths."

At seven o'clock sharp, the whole number of citizens of the little commonwealth of Camp Chicopee, including Jonas the fisher-

man and Thomas the Indian cook, sat in state in the pavilion, and proceeded after the manner of the English and French governing bodies, to turn out its ministry. Mr. Ratcliffe on these occasions was presiding officer, and on his right sat the outgoing president of the "Poss," and on his left the cabinet ministers, who all looked very grave and important, as though the weightiest affairs of a great nation lay on their young shoulders. Below the desk of the presiding officer sat Cousin Harold, clerk of the house as he was ambitiously called, with his pen behind his ear, and in his hands that imposing volume known as "reports," wherein everybody's good and bad deeds were faithfully recorded.

The boys themselves, in great majesty, occupied the body of the house, so to speak, and sat like West Point cadets, erect and soldierly, with chins uplifted by the unwonted adornment of stiff shirts and collars.

Mr. Ratcliffe himself had even donned his second best coat, in honor of the occasion and allowed his wife to tie a straight, narrow, black cravat, which added much to the dignity of his dominieship; and when he stepped forward to the improvised desk, and swung the "gavel" (familiarly known as the mallet in the toolhouse, but now invested with mysterious attributes of authority), each boy felt himself to be a great American citizen.

"My dear young friends and ladies," began Mr. Ratcliffe, "we are here to-night to give you the report of your month's work, to thank your President for the worthiness with which he has filled his office, and to elect a new President.

"Stephen Whittemore has been most faithful in his work, and his example may well be followed by his successors. Under his management the police force has been vigilant in its supervision over health-board

and express-crew. The month has been fruitful, not only of good work, but helpful amusement, thanks to the athletic and social departments. The younger boys of the Scrub Corps have done efficient work, and there has been a notable decrease in fines.

"The choir music has been well rendered and the services at Oak Grove Chapel ably assisted by good attention and excellent music. The Commissary Department has been well and economically managed. Our Secretary will now read the records."

Mr. Ratcliffe was loudly applauded, of course, by the boys, who never lost an opportunity to clap or cheer their chief. Harold then rose, adjusted his glasses, coughed, and surveyed the ranks before him, as he read the following: —

"The officers for the month of July have been: Stephen Whittemore, President; Marshall Whittemore, Chief of Police;

Lewis Prince, Captain of Crew and Athletics; James Hale, Superintendent of Express; Ernest Lovering, Health Officer; Anna Ratcliffe, President of Social and Dramatic Club; Harry Prince, Chief Scullion; Wolcott Prince, Infant.

"These officers have all served well, and are eligible for promotion. The fines for neglected duties amount only to $2.93 as against $4.00 for June. These fines go towards the supper for the Regatta. Sheldon Crawford is especially recommended for honorable mention as having a better record this month than at any time during his life in camp. It is moved that Miss Anne Ratcliffe have a vote of thanks for her good efforts in the Entertainment Club."

"Second the motion."

"Aye, aye! Hi! Ki! Yah!" rose unanimously from the "House."

"Marshall Whittemore has an unblem-

ished record as Chief of Police, and is recommended for the next President. The ticket prepared by the faculty, according to the past month's work, is as follows: —

MARSHALL WHITTEMORE, *President.*
LEWIS PRINCE, *Chief of Police.*
NAN RATCLIFFE, *Commissary.*
DAVY BAKER, *Health Officer.*
STUART DODGE, *Captain of Crew.*
JAMES HALE, *Entertainer.*
HARRY PRINCE, *Captain of Scullions.*
SHELDON CRAWFORD, *Infant.*

"The delegates, composed of the heads of the departments, will now retire and name their candidates, and we will proceed to ballot."

This ceremony was somewhat superfluous as the boys had their own ticket already drawn up, but it was soon presented by Mr. Morton, who, though on crutches, was able to assist at this important function, and was

soon stationed in one sentry box, where he distributed the boys' ballots, which were made out in this form:

President. — LEWIS PRINCE.
Chief of Police. — STEPHEN WHITTEMORE.
Captain of Crew. — JAMES HALE.
Health Officer. — MARSHALL WHITTEMORE.
Commissary, — ERNEST LOVERING.
Entertainer. — NAN RATCLIFFE.
Chief Scullion. — ROBBIE RATCLIFFE.
Infant. — WOLCOTT PRINCE.

The ballots were distributed as called for, some of the boys using the straight ticket, others scratching one or two names from one ticket to use those on the other. The ballots when finally counted, were found to give a tie between Lewis and Marshall for President, the other officers being those headed by Marshall's name.

"Let Nan have the deciding vote," cried the boys, for Nan although holding office, had hitherto never cast a vote, her father

being openly opposed to woman's suffrage, not wishing to encourage it in their mimic world. Here, however, it was impossible to gainsay the boys as they clamored, "Yes, give Nan the choice."

"Well, she must be blindfolded, then," said her father, "and be Justice not Liberty."

"I don't think that just fair," cried the boys simultaneously, the two candidates alone remaining silent, each looking at Nan with a different expression. Nan was dimly conscious of the warfare between the two boys, which was one not of precedence only. Marshall, two years her senior, had been until of late her closest friend, since that first summer when he had come to the old homestead; until Lewis came two years before, Marshall might be said to have had no rival in Nan's regard. But Lewis, all conquering, brooked no rival. His frank confidence in himself, and his power, his

charm, his beauty and talent, were well-nigh irresistible, and the fact that he was purely a boy and her junior, made the relationship between them one of good comradeship. Marshall in his eighteenth year was no longer the boy who had been her playmate, and Nan felt the change, though she could not even to herself describe it. It, however, added to the difficulty of making any choice between them, and her father's condition that she should be blindfolded, alone made it possible. In her heart of hearts she knew that Marshall would be the best president, especially for the "long term," as this last election was for the rest of the season including the two weeks in September.

"Choose, Nan, hurry," cried the boys, and she felt the bandage tied over her eyes with a slight tremor of the heart; but her nerves were too strong to let the hands tremble that drew out the ballot for

President. — LEWIS PRINCE.

"Hi! Ki! Yah! Hurrah for Lewis!" cried the boys.

"Jiminy! Won't his Lordship boss!" said Wolcott.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARGONAUTS.

"THERE is no doubt about it. Lewis will have to resign or be impeached, for if he keeps his office another week the camp will become demoralized. Things are going from bad to worse. The boys won't obey him, and he puts on so many airs that he is quite insufferable. He has had his head turned, and is really too young for the place, you see. It takes something besides sail to run this ship; a fellow must have ballast. Now, Lewis has plenty of sail and wind, too, but he lacks ballast. We ought to have waited another year before putting him into the President's place."

Two of the senior boys sat on the north shore of the island, now and again skipping a pebble, and starting the eddies which

whirled ever wider towards the opposite shore. Stephen and Harold were kindred spirits, taking the business of life seriously, as becomes a young man who is to study for church orders, and another who is already studying law. They were out of sight of the little hamlet of buildings which made up the camp, but not out of sound of its life, and from time to time the blow of an axe startled the echoes of the opposite rocky hill, and bounded on to be lost in the forest beyond, followed again by the shouts of boys at a game of ball in the clearing by the South Wood. Through the wood a faint smoke rose from the cook's fire, telling of supper at no distant hour.

The day had been warm, and there had been a delayed activity and an inclination to drowse, and if the truth were known, it is probable that Steve and Hal had both been caught napping by the north wind five minutes ago.

"What does the Don say?" said Steve, pondering Hal's judgment of the young President, whose tenure of office had now lasted two weeks.

"Well, he believes in letting the boys have the full benefit of their experiment, and work out their own salvation."

"Salvation, yes, but not destruction!" said Steve, taking off his glasses and rubbing them with a corner of his handkerchief, then putting them on again to aid reflection more than take a view of anything in sight.

"Uncle things the boys have got to learn as much by their unsuccessful experiments as by their successful ones. Still, if he really thought the boys, especially the younger ones, were getting spoiled, he would, I believe, come in and put a stop to the mismanagement," said Harold.

"What do you think Lewis's trouble is, except youngness, — that is, his chief

trouble?" asked Steve, taking off his glasses, and blinking blindly.

"Youngness is, of course, at the bottom of it, but if he were only young in everything, as he is in years, one could snub him, and put him down a bit. You see, his having no father has brought him forward a lot, for his mother talks to him as though he were twenty. He has been everywhere, and read no end of books, and has an awfully good opinion of himself with some reason. But he has n't balance. He wants to start a lot of big schemes, and get himself talked about. Instead of making the boys do their usual work better than any one else has done, he wants to set new schemes on foot. But that is n't his style, he must be stirring up a breeze, and getting up a crusade or a revolution or an Argonaut expedition."

Harold whistled impatiently, and Steve continued: —

"The boys will not finish that boat, and as for the head carved from the cedar stump, they won't get that half done before the sports. I must say, though, that Lewis knows what he is about when he takes a pencil or chisel. Now that head of Nan is first rate and he has made the measurements so accurately that the boys have not the slightest trouble in carving it. Only the boat should have been begun a month ago."

Steve stood up and stamped his foot emphatically, and Harold took up the strain somewhat apologetically for Lewis.

"Well, you see, Lewis has the idealist temperament. The little things don't count. Fellows like that don't see the little things. They are like you near-sighted fellows with your glasses off. They don't see anything but the high things; all the rest is a sort of blank. Now, I don't suppose that you with your glasses off can see that boat or those

reeds or cat-tails there. You see just the big sheet of water and the high hills on the other shore. It must be a comfortable temperament to have, — like a trip to Italy with dirt and vermin left out."

"But somebody has got to be practical and small-minded, for there are so many details, especially in this co-operative plan. I think Lewis would better give his whole attention to his boat and prow, if he wants to finish anything before the 25th. Supposing we wait upon him as a committee of two or three. Get Marshall."

Harold stood up and drew himself together as if to shake off the idleness of a do-nothing hour, and to prepare for a piece of disagreeable work.

"Not Marsh. Catch Marsh asking Lewis to resign! Don't you see that would never do? Marshall was the other candidate, and then there 's Nan. Marsh is awfully jealous of Lewis on Nan's account."

"Well, that is silly enough! A child like Nan!" said Harold, disdainfully. "Better not let Cousin Mary know that, or we won't have Nan here another year. It has been just the best thing about the camp, that none of the fellows except Morton have ever been sentimental."

"Not sentimental. Marsh is n't sentimental, but he and Nan have always been such chums, before Lewis came."

"Well, we 'll have to get along this time without Marshall. Wonder where we 'll find His Majesty?"

"Down at the studio. I fancy he has hardly been out to-day. It has been so hot."

Setting their yachting caps at an angle where they appeared to have some relation to their occipital development, the two young men took their way to a remote corner of the island, where, hidden among evergreens, a picturesque and rustic little

building, twelve by fifteen feet, called "Lewis's, studio," was concealed.

Put up at his mother's expense, this little den of Lewis's had been fitted out with every appliance of amateur photography, and Lewis, who with all his faults was generosity itself, gave to his fellow-artists free and lavish use of his materials and laboratory, his dark closet, his sensitized plates and blue prints, and by general use, it had become a sort of Camera Club room.

Here, then, were the results of the many kodak tramps. On the walls were photographs of every camp boy past and present, in every attitude possible to human figure, in every attire known to the species, from elegant to disreputable, with every expression possible to facial muscles, and many, by reason of imperfect light and focus, impossible to man or ape. Here was the gallery of pets, lost and found, from the fox caught and tamed by Marshall to the baby owl

caged by Robbie, and many other favorites, canine, bovine, and feline.

But one corner of this sacred precinct was consecrated entirely to photographs of Nan, professional and amateur, in all the varying stages of her infancy and girlhood. Here was Nan in long frocks at the age of six months, and Nan in short frocks at the age of six years. There was Nan very prim, dressed for a Boston photograph at the age of ten, and here again dozens of blue prints and brown prints of Nan at eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen. Nan in short hair, in long hair, in smiles, in frowns, in groups with any number of boys from two to twenty. Nan at tennis, and Nan at ball. The latest was one upon which Lewis had spent much care in finishing, Nan in the yellow satin gown and lace mantilla found in the theatrical trunk.

At the right was the dramatic club in its manifold make-ups for plays and tableaux.

Here, as jolly tars in "Pinafore," there, as twenty lovesick maidens in "Patience;" now as brigands, then as monks, again as the dwarfs of Rip Van Winkle. Here was the base-ball team, there the foot-ball eleven; on this side, the tennis champions of alternate years, on that, the crews of the regattas.

Lewis's studio was indeed a museum of no mean importance, the pictorial records of which might furnish a very fair history of camp life. To-day, Lewis stood in the centre of it, before a table on which lay a large sheet of brown paper, where was traced the outlines of a female head, so marked and traversed by lines and measurements as to resemble nothing so much as the chart of a phrenologist. At one side, on a rude support, was a block of cedar smoothly shaped into the form of a female head. About this block were grouped four lads handling the tools of wood-carving.

Two under Lewis's direction were chiseling upon the block. At the knock the boys hastily threw a cloth over the half-completed head before opening the door, for this was to be a secret from Nan, and must not be surprised.

Lewis received the boys graciously, as was his way, saying: —

"Want to see our head, Hal? We cover it up, for we don't want Nan to know anything about it."

The younger lads threw back the cloth, proudly, and displayed their handiwork which was fast gaining recognizable outlines, so fast that Harold who had only seen it in its first stage, drew back with amazement.

"Whew! that is immense! Did n't know you could do so well as that."

"Oh, I could n't alone, for I hate the details; but the other fellows do all the hard work. I just show them how, and make

the drawings and measurements," said Lewis, magnanimously.

"I should say that was a good deal," said Jimmie, looking admiringly at Lewis.

"I never learned half so much about wood-carving at school as Lewis has told me," added Ernest.

Steve and Harold looked at each other somewhat abashed. They had come to blame and stayed to praise, and they found Lewis accomplishing a task, which both of them thought titanic; for neither of them had that spark of genius which kindles enthusiasm in those who are near it.

"I say, Lewis," said Steve at last, with a good deal of awkward constraint, "this sort of work takes a good deal of your time, and then there is the training for the race. Would n't you like to be relieved from your 'presidential,' till this is done? That is sort of humdrum business. Suppose that you keep the honor and preside at the meet-

ings, and just name a vice-president, who will look after the details."

Lewis flushed for a moment, for he was too clever not to see what was meant, and to know that he had neglected some of the duties of his office.

"Thanks, awfully, Steve. I wish somebody would take it. I don't care much for the work, but if somebody does the work, I shall certainly not keep all the glory. I hope I 'm not such a chump as that. I 'll tell you what, I 'll resign in favor of Marshall. Call a meeting for to-night. Nan said I would n't make a good prex. Let 's shake hands on that."

"All right!" said the young men, closing the door which Lewis locked after them.

They walked on in silence for a few moments, till midway to the pavilion they met Mr. Ratcliffe. Harold was the first to speak.

"Uncle, we have been down to Lewis's

studio. Do you know what a good thing he is doing there?"

Mr. Ratcliffe raised his eyebrows, for he had not been ignorant of the ill-feeling of the seniors towards Lewis's aspirations.

"So you think it fine?"

"Immense!" said Steve, emphatically. "We went down to make a proposition to him to resign the presidency," said Hal, honestly.

"Well, what did he say?" asked the Don, showing no surprise.

"He agreed with us, that he was n't just fitted for all the details, and would rather work on the boat and the prow. He is to call a meeting for to-night, and resign in favor of Marshall."

"Eh, so!" said the Don. "That is the way you have settled it. I am glad you have worked it out that way; but Marshall must be carefully handled, or we will see sparks fly. Lewis is a genius and will

eventually do something with his art. Meantime the commonplace suffers. One can't expect everything. I have just been down to see the boat. The lines are good. The skeleton is up, and it is ready for the outside work. She may prove a treacherous craft, but the boys are interested, and it will be a new feature for the sports and there is no real harm done. I think I will see Marshall myself about this before Lewis, as I can adjust it better, perhaps."

"That will be best, I guess, Uncle."

CHAPTER IX.

THE REGATTA.

TRUE to his character, Lewis rose with the elasticity of a rubber ball, and although subdued for a few days by the abdication of his distinguished honors, he was soon lost again in the accomplishment of his great boat scheme, entirely forgetful of the presidential glory which Marshall, not without much persuasion, had finally assumed. The boat itself had progressed rapidly. The boys, in crews of four and five, had taken turns in sheathing the double keel, until that was ready for the mounting of the curious triangular deck-body, which is one of the features of the catamaran. The calking and painting finally finished, the rigging and sails, which had been or-

dered from Boston, were set in place, and the final christening and launching was to be a feature of the great Regatta Day, August 25, which, in all seasons, and none more than this, marked the zenith of camp glory. The special feature of this important ceremony, the placing of the prow-head, was also reserved till late in the day, lest Nan should discover the secret which had been so carefully guarded.

The achievement of this feat, and the other preparations for Regatta Day had not been gained without many trials and disappointments, but on the eve of the twenty-fifth the flags were flying proudly, all the colors were set, the course staked for the morrow's races, the boys all trained and trimmed for fight and victory. Lewis, after his struggle, in the full consciousness that he had deserved to be removed from his position as captain of the Junior Crew, had been put upon his mettle by his reinstal-

ment to favor, and never rowed so well or kept his crew in such good form as on the evening of the 24th, when he pulled over the course for the last time before the race.

"Those boys from Little Neck will find it hard to beat us," said the young captain proudly.

"That 's so, Prince," said Marshall, the leader of the single sculls.

Those boys from Little Neck had however some advantages not to be despised. The rival camp was composed of boys from a well-known school, who were tutoring on an island at the upper end of the lake. Although there ostensibly to work off conditions and regain lost places in their classes, a few of them had received the benefit of pulling under a thorough trainer. Lewis was, however, not to be daunted by them, and was only too glad to meet a "foeman worthy of his steel."

The other contests were of no mean value, and the "sports at Camp Chicopee" were the great event of the lake season, attracting visitors and participants in large numbers until the water presented a truly Venetian aspect, as every species of boat, catboat, steam-launch, wherry and catamaran, floated by the shores of the Island Camp.

But we are anticipating. 'Tis only the eve of the Regatta. If the boys' hearts beat high, there was one girl whose heart was tripping wildly. For Nan it was to be an occasion of momentous importance, marking a most crucial change in her status at camp.

Hitherto she had been the camp angel, confidante, and idol. To-morrow she was to take her part "as one of the fellows." Was she to lose by it or gain by it? Would the boys reverence or love her less? Would her influence be lessened or increased?

Poor little girl, sitting there in her long wrapper, her beautiful hair unbound,

> "Standing, with reluctant feet
> Where the brook and river meet
> Womanhood and childhood fleet."

She does not know that she is battling with a problem which may confront her years hence at the college door, still later yet, perhaps, at the ballot-box. Conscious only of her love of action, her strength, courage and ability, she had hardly questioned her desire to enter the list of combatants; but lately had she begun to realize that she might be making a mistake in following out her cherished wish.

"Well, it will be only for this once. Next summer I shall be sixteen; my dresses will be long, my hair up, and then I can't. Just for this once I must and can. Suppose, however, I fail, will the boys pity or despise me? How will they treat me? They shall

NAN, THE NIGHT BEFORE THE REGATTA.

not; I will carry off that single scull and the tennis prize."

With that, she took down her boating dress, sewed on the twin colors of crimson and blue, which was the camp's badge of neutrality toward both the great universities, tied the ribbons like a girl and not like a boy, as she thought herself, went to sleep to dream of swimming the Hellespont to save Harry Prince from drowning.

The day of the twenty-fifth dawned as fair as the fondest sportsman could desire. Even the early morning was breathlessly fair, and twenty boys, most lightly clad, dashed out from the dormitory and made a bold plunge into the lake at six o'clock on that momentous day.

Twenty boys I had said; but there were, to be accurate, twenty less two, for Sydney Norcross had been taken away, and Lewis Prince had an hour earlier taken his plunge, dressed himself in faultless regatta cos-

tume, and walked to the farther end of the island and back, and as the boys took their dip, was getting his muscle up by various exercises.

"I say, Prince, that is taking advantage," called one of the boys from the water.

"The earth is free, the water and sun also; I have n't taken anything that did n't belong to me," the Prince answered, laughingly.

"Why did n't you wake us?"

"Nobody waked me; but I 'll give you boys a chance. Rub yourselves down, then hurry up and have a pull before breakfast," Lewis finally called, turning a hand-spring on the floating pier. With a wild whoop the boys were out again, and in ten minutes the water was the scene of some lively exercise as the boats were brought out. Breakfast was of minor importance to the boys themselves, but their preceptors insisted that the regular eating should go on, or

else no play. Dish-washing was despatched with scant ceremony, and the business of making ready for visitors set about.

Improvised seats were arranged along the water front, and a platform for the judges, a select few, erected. This eminence was to be occupied by what was dignified as the "faculty" of Camp Chicopee and Little Neck, the ladies from the Cabin Island, and a few others from the lake summer colonies. The majority of the guests were expected to remain in their own boats on the lake, well out of the course.

At ten o'clock promptly, the first delegation arrived, a boat-load of young girls and boys from Chicopee Hotel at the end of the lake; then followed the crew from Little Neck, gorgeous in yellow and black. Not long after, a crowded steam-launch puffed up and left its passengers to find seats on the bank; then the little "Worry" from Cabin Island came modestly to the landing,

rowed by Mr. Morton and Robbie, bearing Mrs. Ratcliffe and Marian.

Nan's little wherry was already in line, and she herself taut and trim in sailor rig in the pavilion with the boys, waiting their summons.

At half past ten, Mr. Ratcliffe mounted the judges' stand and read the order of the sports.

I. RACE: between picked crews of four boys, from Little Neck and Camp.

II. RACE: six single sculls, five camp boys and one *camp girl.*

A loud cheer greeted the announcement.

III. LUNCHEON.

AFTERNOON: Christening and launching of the new catamaran, made by the boys of Camp Chicopee.

TENNIS.

EVENING: Dancing.

At the fall of the flag Lewis's picked crew took their boat out, followed by the

Little Neck fellows. These boys were bigger and brawnier than Lewis's crew, but looked, to the wise, clumsier. The camp boys looked young and inexperienced for a trial with them. Still Lewis had a master mind and arm, and he knew what he was about. A breath of admiration rose from the ladies as the handsome boy led out his crew, and there were but few pretty girls who were not ready to sing his praises, though pledged to the enemy.

"Is n't he a dear?"

"What a regular stunner he will be when he 's twenty!"

"A Prince! See how he holds himself!"

"Bravo! See their boat shoot ahead!"

"How lightly they handle her!"

"The Little Neck fellows are clumsy and too heavy."

"They don't pull in good form."

"Oh, dear! now they are taking it too easy."

"The little fellows will win, for they are half over the course now."

"There, Little Neck gains! there they go ahead of the Prince!"

"No, they are taking wind, — they know what they are about."

"See, the Prince rows smooth and clean!"

"Won't he be a treasure on the 'Varsity, if he keeps it up?"

"Fifteen, did you say? He looks seventeen."

"There they come round the curve, shooting ahead a whole length! Bravo, for Prince!"

"Well done, boys!"

These were the running sentiments expressed in voices low and loud, but chiefly feminine.

It was well done. Even Little Neck had to acknowledge that their crew had not practised enough, believing it too easy to beat Lewis's crew.

"The prize, then, goes to the camp. Prince's crew for the Ratcliffe prize!" cried the judge, an impartial outsider.

A little more chatter, no end of adulation for Lewis after he made his reappearance, well-groomed and beaming, showering his smiles and his thanks with princely lavishness. Then a lull, and the little wherries shot into view, rowed each by a single oarsman and *one oarswoman.*

Nan would certainly not have been humanly feminine had her heart not beat wildly as she pulled her little wherry into line with the five boys, and as the shouts grew louder and more confusing, her courage almost gave out.

Marshall Whittemore, an excellent oarsman, was next in position, and under cover of the noise, leaned forward to encourage her: —

"Don't think of the people, Nan, keep your eyes on my bow; we'll pull together."

Nan gave him a grateful look and pulled a strong oar, keeping Marsh's bow not only in sight but beside her. The others shot ahead, and for three minutes Nan thought she had no chance. The boys seemed not to care a whit for the crowd. The course was a half-mile course, and before it was half done, she had forgotten the crowd and was thinking only of Marshall's boat.

The others began to lag, thinking it girls' play, and that it would be easy enough to come in at the end. Nan's spirit was aroused by this. Marshall saw the fire, was spurred into greater effort, and shot beyond the others, Nan leading them all. Marshall saw that he could easily distance her, but the others were left behind and had fallen out of stroke.

"Shall I gain on her, or let her go in? Let her win! I shall hate myself if I beat her, and she will hate me, if she wins,

knowing I might have done so easily enough," thought Marshall.

The boy's thinking at this time was rapid, more feeling than thinking, for there were but four boat-lengths to be gained, and he had let Nan's boat shoot half a length ahead. The girl was pale and intent, and Marshall glanced at her with a queer look in his eyes.

"I can't take it from her, the race shall be hers. Guess I'll play sick, that's the best way out of it, then she won't mistrust I gave her the race"

After this Marshall apparently gave up the race, and Nan went in with but little effort, the others following in straggling order.

"Hurrah! Hi! Ki! Yah! Nan's ahead!" yelled the little fellows, throwing up their caps, as she reached the goal. As she landed, they bore her off triumphantly, the older boys more consciously beaten, sulking a little in the rear.

To Nan, however, the triumph was not quite as enjoyable as she thought it would be; for in the depths of her heart she had the feeling that Marshall's sickness had been feigned, because he would not take advantage of her as a girl. Instead, however, of hating him for it, she began to dislike her own part in the contest.

"It 's no use, they can't forget that I am a girl. I shall never be a boy to them. They will always treat me differently. I suppose I must make up my mind to that. I will take the first chance to tell Marsh what I think."

The opportunity did not, however, come very soon, for Marshall was busy with the yacht racing, and when the lunch-hour came, Nan had her own duties of hospitality to perform. As a rule, Nan was not at her ease with her own sex, and the fashionable visitors from the hotels at the upper end of the lake, added much to the annoyance she

had experienced over her questionable victory. The gay girls who sought to coquette with the older boys exasperated her to a disagreeable extreme, and the flattering and fond mammas who, while gushing over her own athletic prowess, in their secret hearts congratulated themselves that their girls were more ladylike, — one and all offended our Nan so much to-day that she felt herself bristling like a porcupine.

She had always been able to escape from the attentions of both mammas and daughters in previous years and to lose herself in the numbers of boys, but to-day, the boys deserted the pavilion as soon as luncheon, and disappeared mysteriously in the direction of the launch.

Little did Nan herself know of the surprise which was in store for her, as, battling with her inclination to be "pudgiky," as she used to call her rebellious moods when a child, and a sense of obligation to her

mother and sister who were scattering graciousness and comfort without stint, she endeavored to comport herself with some show of modesty and grace.

Poor Nan! if she could only have looked through the trees to the rise on the shore where the boys were joyously raising the precious head to its place in the prow! But not a suspicion of this crowning act of devotion to the "Little Lady of the Lake" had entered her head, and as the bell sounded, which signalled the hour of the launch, and Nan found herself pressed on either side by rustling skirts and broad leghorn hats, gay with flowers, she longed to be one of the boys in truth.

They were not silly girls either; and if Nan had brought her own good sense and heart to bear upon her relation with them, she might have found they had many good points, and were only foolish skin-deep, as it were. But as her own brusqueness was but

skin-deep, they, too, failed to understand her.

"Do tell us about the new boat," asked one of the girls, Marshall's own cousin, as they walked through the woods to the shore.

"There is n't much to tell," said Nan, "for you will see it right away."

The girls looked at each other.

What a long story they could have made of the building of that catamaran, of Lewis's cleverness and wealth, and all the fancy woven about it as the ship of the Argonauts, the boat in which they were to explore the waters beyond the head of the lake. But Nan did not know the schoolgirl art of spinning a wonderful tale with embellishment of adjective and interjection. To herself, her answer was sufficient and satisfactory, and the two girls wondered how their cousins, the Whittemore boys, could find so much to admire in this brusque Nan Ratcliffe.

Soon the boat was in sight, the queer, fantastic, twin keel structure, and raised above it the triangular deck and body, and between the keels, at the apex of the triangle, the carved cedar head, bearing the impress of Nan's well known and loved lineaments. The curve of her chin and cheek, the tilt of her nose and the arch of her brow; and there, surmounting it like a halo in letters of gilt, her own beloved title: —

"Our Little Lady of the Lake."

Yet they all saw it before Nan herself, and the voices that cried "Hi! Ki! Yah!" seemed to dull her sensibilities for the moment, till her mother's arm was about her and her mother's voice saying encouragingly, —

"Don't disappoint the boys, dear. See what they have done for you. The head was Lewis's own design."

Heedless of the crowd then, and the clamor, Nan rushed into their midst, and was thanking them all, with her heart in her eyes, — thanking them as only Nan could, when she was one of themselves and knew that all this was no empty praise and compliment, but only one more plea for her help and guidance, and realizing that because she was a girl and not a boy, she could help them all, she proudly christened: —

"Our Little Lady of the Lake."

Exactly how the afternoon passed, Nan could hardly remember; how she played through the tennis tournament and won the "ladies' single," and lost in the doubles because of that stupid Philadelphia girl's "foul," all were but confused impressions, mingled with her pride and happiness in the boys' success; for the catamaran made a beautiful run to the head of the lake, and

every one was loud in its praises. The afternoon passed in one long series of joyful triumphs for the boys, and when evening came, the pavilion was gorgeous with Chinese lanterns, and on the raised platform were the "fiddlers three" from the village, whose music, if not classical, was contagious in its rhythm and merriment. Everybody was in the gayest mood.

Nan, who so seldom, except in masquerading, had any opportunity to wear other clothes than rough-and-ready ones, seemed to the boys a very much transformed person in a wonderfully befrilled muslin. Nan was a little in awe of herself in "dress up," and somewhat self-conscious in the light garb of fashion, which the city girls carried with such ease, and was glad to be able to forget herself in the jolly figures of a familiar reel or lancers.

The boys themselves were allowed no full dress at camp. For them a lighter knicker-

bocker and stiff shirt were the only change from corduroys and flannels; but they were a handsome set of fellows, big and little, bronzed and brawny, and fell as easily into the dancing as though it had been their nightly habit all the summer weeks.

Nan did not forget that she had a word to say to Marshall, and when he came to claim her for a dance saw her opportunity.

Marshall was one of the senior camp boys, having begun his life at the lake, when, a delicate lad of twelve, he was sent up to Mr. Ratcliffe to be toned up for one summer, and had returned year after year, though it was long since his physique had shown signs of delicacy. There he had gained strength and suppleness, and he loved the camp and cared nothing for the gay fashionable resorts frequented by his mother and sisters. He was one of those plain-featured boys, who depend upon a good figure and intelligence for their claims to good looks. Somewhat

freckled, with light gray, heavy-lashed eyes, an ample mouth which an incipient mustache but served to outline, Marshall's face would never be his passport to the favor of the fair sex. But his dexterous hand, easy carriage, broad shoulders, kindly manners, and clever tongue made him a favorite.

He had always treated Nan as a big brother would, until this summer, when, conscious either of his freshman dignity, or of Nan's budding maturity and attractiveness, his manner toward her had partaken of an odd mixture of gallantry and sentimental familiarity, entirely new to Nan in her association with the boys.

He had even on this very evening called her "Miss Nan," much to her surprise and disgust, giving her an unpleasant consciousness of her false position in the regatta. When in the pauses of the quadrille Marshall had ventured to remark that she was very

pretty, poor Nan's amazement knew no bounds.

"Marshall, what have I done, or what is the matter with you that you should treat me so to-night? I begin to think you are angry with me for taking the race. And after all, Marsh, you gave me the race. You could have come in easily enough. I wish you had. I wanted fair play and no vantage. At any rate I have learned a good lesson, and I won't try for honors with you boys again, unless you will all swear to treat me just as though I were a boy."

Nan's cheeks were flaming and she stamped her foot imperiously. Marshall colored, thereby causing his freckled countenance to assume a mahogany hue, and his confusion at having his ruse thus baldly presented baffled for the time his usual composure, and he was glad of the interruption which the ladies' grand chain gave to the *tête-à-tête*. He was forced into some expla-

nation it was quite evident, for Nan was not going to accept the feigned sickness, however much he had deceived the judges. He was only half ready for Nan as she came back, and he stammered: —

"I don't know what you mean, truly; I am not in the least angry. Why should I be? How have I treated you differently? I am sure I wanted you to have the race, and you pulled splendidly. You did deserve it."

Nan was not the girl to take the coin of compliment for truth, and turning an uncompromising glance upon him, asked: —

"Honest and true, Marshall, you were n't sick, and you gave me the race outright?"

"I was n't really sick, but I was very tired," said Marshall in a shambling way utterly unlike him.

"Tired, oh, Marshall, tired? If I had been a boy, would you have let me go in ahead, because you were tired?"

"Perhaps not, but then you were not a boy."

"That's just it. Well, I suppose I will have to own up that I exposed myself to that when I went in. It was very kind of you, though, but I mean you to take the prize. I'll never touch it."

"Oh, Nan, that is punishing me more than I deserve. After all you pushed me to owning up, and I did not win the race any way, and have n't any claim on the prize. Now let's be friends. You look real mad. You know I may not come back next summer, for just as likely as not, I will have to tutor all summer, I am such a lunkhead at my books. At least you won't spoil my last regatta for me," said Marshall, irresistibly.

"I should think I had done that already. I want to undo what I have done. At least you must take the prize as a souvenir of Chicopee."

"I would much rather take your friendship. We have been playfellows for five years. Let's not quarrel because we are growing up. I promise not to tell you again that you look pretty till you go to your first ball, nor to call you Miss Nan till you go to college, if you will let the prize stand as it is."

Nan laughed.

"I think that a foolish bargain. Of course you won't call me 'Miss Nan,' because I don't want you to; and as for the ball, I shall never have the chance to go to a ball. As to college, I am afraid that is only a castle in the air too."

"All happiness to him who knows how to wait. You will go to college and beat us fellows at classics and sciences yet."

"Oh, I'll never beat any of you except by a fluke like to-day."

"Yes, you will. Your head is better than most of ours, if your muscles are n't.

Here 's your next partner, Prince Charming. Come, is it peace or war ? "

" Peace," and Nan gave him her hand as she went off with Lewis.

Though a year her junior, Lewis was as tall as Nan, and they were fair to look upon as they joined the dancers. Lewis was radiant with success and satisfied vanity, and bubbling with good spirits.

" What were you and Marsh squabbling about Nan ? — such a glorious time as this. You both looked daggers at each other a minute ago."

" Secret," said Nan, laughing.

" Oh, I 'll find out," said Lewis ; " Marsh lost the prize and was mad I suppose. I knew you 'd get it. Was n't it fine to win though ? "

" I am not so awfully puffed up after all, Lewis," said Nan, humbly. " Did the race look quite fair to you ? "

" Why not fair ? Marshall just gave

out; guess he'd been smoking. If a fellow can't keep up till he gets the goal, then he has to lose the race. You surely don't think he deserves the prize?"

"I'm not so sure that he does n't."

"Well, don't be a goose, Nan. Take all the glory you can get. It 's my motto."

Feeling that Marshall might not like too much made of his generosity, and knowing Lewis to be anything but reticent, Nan dropped the subject, but did a good deal of thinking about it all the rest of the evening, and when she was safe under her mother's wing at night, she poured out her troubles to this best friend.

"Mamma, do you know, Marshall gave me the race, and I want him to have the prize."

Now mothers, like Cupid, are often blind where their children are concerned, and Mrs. Ratcliffe had had a single eye that day to Nan's health, strength, beauty and

prowess. That she had rowed well she could have no doubt, that she had won the race by superiority and not favor seemed very clear to the partial mother eye, and in a measure, Nan's sudden announcement was a downfall of a justifiable pride.

"Why, daughter, you rowed beautifully; we were all so proud of you. I was sorry Marshall gave out. Herbert thinks he must have been smoking cigarettes. I do not think he meant to give you the race. I am sure papa did not think so, nor the other judges. The race was clearly yours."

"Now, mamma, that was very unjust of Herbert, for Marsh has n't touched a cigarette for weeks. I shall tell him and papa just how it was. Marshall led me ahead of the others, encouraging me from the start, and would not go in, when he could, but just let me take the race."

"Why should Marshall give you the race, dear?"

"Oh, because I'm a girl, don't you see, and he thought it would be mean to take advantage."

Nan said this in an excited tone, which brought in sister Marian, who took in the situation and said: —

"So, Nan, you and Marshall have had a quarrel over the race. I knew there would be some trouble when you went in. It is time you were a little more grown up, Nan. You must n't expect to play with boys all your life."

That was sister Marian's view. A quiet domestic girl, always fond of home-keeping occupations, she had never been able to follow Nan in her freedom and out-door happiness in the camp life. She was just now a great help to her mother, though both parents looked to Nan as the one who would make more stir in the world, and felt that though her life might not be as peaceful as Marian's, it would broaden in the end

into the wider paths opening to woman in the great world.

To Marian, a girl's life was one of trifles; the dusting and darning, the tying-up of winter woollens and preserving, were events of greatest importance to her, and she had no need of idealizing even these pursuits.

But she was sweet and placid in her disposition, never fretting about the unattainable, and Herbert Morton's hearth would always be well swept and garnished.

It was a grief to Marian, it would be better to say, an annoyance to her, that Nan cared so little for her clothes, so much for her boat and the boys' sports.

As a matter of fact, Nan had no girl companions to develop the feminine side of her nature, and she took sister Marian's aspersions very ill, so that the good mother had to make peace between them before there was any sleep.

"Now, now, children, this is not a good

way to close a pleasant day. Nan, you rowed well; papa was pleased and proud. Marian, dear, another year will be time enough for us to make a young lady of our tomboy. We don't want to lose her yet, and there is no need to put false notions into her head, and make a young lady of her."

So Nan went off to sleep a little soothed, but Marian and her mother had a little more conversation in their own room.

"Mother," said Marian, wise in her own experience, "Marshall is really very fond of Nan. Herbert spoke of it to me, and said it was no wonder, for she looked so pretty to-night. She is really growing up too fast to be allowed to play with boys so familiarly. Marshall is seventeen, almost eighteen."

"Oh, Marian, what nonsense! My dear, because you and Herbert happen to be in love, you must not spoil our little girl by

such sentiment. She's only a child. The summer is almost gone, and another year Marshall may not come back, and Nan!"

"Have you said anything of Mrs. Prince's plan?"

"No, I thought I would wait till the sports were over. I don't see how I can spare you both, but your father favors it."

CHAPTER X.

NAN'S FUTURE.

"'YOU don't know one useful thing in this 'varsal world,' like Di Vernon, Nan," said Mr. Ratcliffe quizzically, a few days after the sports, waving a letter temptingly just out of reach. "You don't dust nor darn, and your pies are n't fit to eat. You can make the best coffee, though, on a picnic, and when

> 'Pain and anguish wring the brow
> A ministering angel thou,'

for you have a knack for nursing quite extraordinary, my daughter. Still, Marian says you are not useful and don't know anything systematically. Now, is Marian right, or a certain lady who has written me this letter all on one subject, my daughter Nan?"

Nan laughed, though dying with curiosity, and pretended to be very well satisfied with the *prima facie* evidence that the letter was from Mrs. Prince.

"I know Mrs. Prince's black-bordered, violet-scented paper, papa, and the French stamp gives part of your secret away. But what does she say that provokes Marian to cataloguing my imperfections? She ought to know that Di Vernon is my heroine. I'd much rather be that same Diana than any goody-goody girl out of Miss Edgeworth's books."

"Eh, oh! so sets the wind, — then you don't want to know any more of this letter than that it is from Mrs. Prince, and I can keep a great project of my own a secret."

Papa tantalizingly put the letter back.

Something wild shot across Nan's brain, a fleeting, almost too delightful vision of realized hopes.

"Oh, papa, am I to go abroad with the boys?"

"Not quite, my lassie; guess again. You are quite warm, almost burning as the game goes."

"Then I am to go to spend the winter with them and go to school."

"Exactly, little Yankee, you have it. What do you want to learn? French frills, dancing and music and be a fine young lady, have tutors and masters, or take up something serious?"

"What may I do? Does Mrs. Prince give me my choice?"

"Well, here is the letter."

PARIS, August 1st, 189–.

MY DEAR MRS. RATCLIFFE: — I write before sailing for home, to ask a great favor, and hope that by the time I reach Chicopee, you will have your answer ready for me.

I want Nan, dear friend. It is almost too selfish of me to ask you for her, just when you

are losing Marian, and I should not do it, unless I could offer her something which you, perhaps, are not quite ready to give her, that opportunity for study which she can have so advantageously with us, in the city of schools and churches. She can take what lessons she likes, music, French, dancing, ologies, anything which she desires to realize her possibilities. She is so clever she should have the best of opportunities.

For us she would fill a great want. I have no daughters, my boys no sisters. They are growing away from me in their boyish pursuits, and she would give me companionship and an object for feminine fancies as well. Lewis needs Nan's sterling sense too, and she should have the benefit of his private teachers, or she shall go to the best and most fashionable school in the city. She should be dressed entirely without your thought, and I should take pleasure in gratifying my own selfish whim, without spoiling the dear girl's sensible mind. Don't talk of obligation. There can be none, unless on my part, for Nan herself has done more for my boys than I can ever repay. So let her come to me, at least for this winter, and if you can spare her next summer, we will plan again. I won't take *no* for an

answer, and neither will the boys, who will clamor and give you no peace until Nan is ours.

So do be good to

Your sincere friend,

HORTENSE D. PRINCE.

Long before Nan had finished reading the letter her father's and mother's eyes were brimming full of tears, and when she laid the letter down she threw her arms about her mother's neck, and cried half for joy and half for sorrow.

"I don't know what to say, mamma. I want to go, but can you spare me?"

"Yes, dear; we think it is for your advantage, and have decided to accept Mrs. Prince's offer, if you are willing to go," said Mrs. Ratcliffe, falteringly, as a sob choked her voice. She looked to her husband to encourage Nan.

"Think what you will know, when you come back to us, dear. Shall it be French and frills, or sciences and ologies?" her father asked jocosely.

"I will think about that later, papa. Just now I can only think of leaving you and mamma, but I don't believe it will be French and dancing. Certainly they will not be useful to me or make me helpful to you. I want to learn something practical."

It was a very thoughtful Nan who went about the lake for the next few days, almost always alone, rowing her boat or sitting on the shore skipping pebbles. She was the target for a good deal of playful raillery on the part of the boys, whose society she seemed to eschew, and some of them dared to call out in passing: —

"Maiden meditation, fancy free."

But Nan maintained a moody silence till one day, Marshall, sailing his catboat on the quiet side of the island spied a small row-boat apparently unguided, drifting leeward. On near inspection he discovered Nan lying flat in the boat, her head pillowed on her arms, deep in thought.

"Halloo, there, Nan! tired of life or rowing? Come into my boat and sail in, and I'll lend you my pea-jacket and you can take a comfortable nap."

"No, thanks! I'm all right. Have something on my mind," Nan answered briefly.

"Should say so; doesn't agree with you to have something on your mind. I'd throw it overboard and enjoy life once more. Can't I relieve you? My mind never has too much ballast. Anyway, it's odd to see you moping."

While firing these shot, Marshall had drawn the little boat up and fastened it in tow with his own, so that Nan had nothing to do but listen.

"Hope it's not that unlucky race. It's hardly worth a thought, much less four days of melancholy."

Nan had insisted upon placing Marshall right before her father and the boys, for her sense of justice would not brook the sus-

picion of smoking which had attached itself to Marshall on his failure to win. Lest he should imagine that she was really brooding over the race, Nan decided to take him into her confidence.

"I am trying to make up my mind to leave the lake, the country, and papa, mamma, and Robbie, and go to Brooklyn to spend this year in study. You can't know how tormented I am with conflicting desires. I thought I wanted nothing so much in the world as the chance to go, but now that it is mine to take or refuse, it seems as though I could not leave this place for the city. Every hour I think of something I can't bear to leave. Now it's the lake, again it's the view of Mt. Washington from my window at home; then I think of the nutting and the coasting on winter nights, and I hear the ice crackling and the whizzing of my 'Leader' down the hill. You can't think how I love it. I love to be free in the

air and on the broad country fields to ride and to walk over the piles of autumn leaves, and yet for the last two years I have dreamed of this chance to study and make something useful of myself. I wish this path of learning did n't lie through city streets. Something chokes me here, when I think of the high brick walls, and the people crowding and pushing."

As she sat up in her boat, her hair tossed in tendrils by the breeze, her round, white throat which had been loosely bound by a silk handkerchief, bared to the winds, it seemed to Marshall that the city life would be more beautiful for Lewis Prince, with this radiant girl in his house, but he wisely kept silent, and Nan continued : —

"But I am going — only I must drink my fill of all that I love here so that I shall not be thirsty for it for months. Then another thing which is troubling me, is that I want to make up my mind what I am going to be

in the future, when I grow up. I can't waste my time on mere accomplishments. I must study to some purpose, so that I can be of use to my father and mother. In a few years papa will not have the nerve to manage so many boys. Even this summer he has been a good deal tired and nervous."

This was more than Marshall could bear without interrupting, and he said : —

"Come, Nan, you have brooded over all this till you have magnified molehills into mountains. You are n't going to carry the burdens of a whole family on your shoulders at your age. Your father is not an old man and he is growing tougher and stronger every year up here. The best thing you can do is to make the most of your chances. Study what you have the taste for and trust to circumstances to show you what you will do by and by. So you are to go to Mrs. Prince ?"

"Yes," said Nan, her heart lightened by

Marshall's wholesome advice. "Mrs. Prince has sent me a most generous invitation for this year and probably next, and then papa thinks I may be ready for college."

"Well, the best thing for you to do is to make the best of it. Bottle up a few sunsets, take a piece of pink cretonne around with you, like one of those æsthetic cranks in London, a pine pillow, and a little new-mown hay in your top drawer will give you a sense of country life to help you along over your homesickness. As for Mt. Washington, he's a fine old fellow in summer, but, Great Scott! I'd as lief be several hundred miles south of his snow-crest in January as not. You don't know what white snow they have over in Brooklyn, and plenty of wind, too, whistling round your ears. They are awfully blue over there, too, most as bad as Boston, no end of lectures and improvement associations. Oh, you'll be as wise as Minerva after two years

in Brooklyn. Good-bye to frolics then, so just make the most of what 's left of our Nan. Another year and we will be having 'Miss Anna.'"

"Now, that 's too bad, Marshall. You almost broke your promise."

"So I did, but a truce. It 's an ill wind that blows nobody good. You 'll see the Thanksgiving foot-ball game, and go a-top of our coach, perhaps."

CHAPTER XI.

NAN'S BIRTHDAY.

ONE of those August days, Nan woke to find herself not famous but *sixteen*.

It was a day which, for months, had loomed above all other days, a sort of Mt. Washington in her highdays and holidays. As a little girl of twelve, she had often been inspired to date her age, with obliteration of the years between, forward to that great far-away birthday. "In four more years I will be sixteen," and then it became, "in three more years," and "in two," until as it grew nearer, that important day seemed still more mysterious. At last it was really here, and the sun himself seemed happy for her, as he danced in at her little east window.

The waves on her beloved lake shore seemed to babble of bright days all to be like this. The far and near hills blushed with joy in the fair dawn as Nan sprang lightly out of bed, lest she disturb the household before she herself was free from meditation and ready to be disturbed. Nan had retired very early the night before, with the Puritan conscience of her ancestors, observing the Sabbath on Saturday evening, to commune once more for the last time with her fifteen-year-old self.

It was a very sacred task, quite new in a way to energetic Nan, usually too busy for meditation, and as she rose that August morning, her busy fancy saw for one minute a fleeting vision of a little girl with tawny locks vanish into space. Her own fifteen-year-old self looked back and smiled half sadly, half gladly, with regret and yet a promise. Nan stretched out her hand to grasp the vision but it was gone. "My

own old self! Come back!" she called, half playfully, and yet plaintively.

"Will she remember me, should we meet again at eighteen or yet at twenty-one? Would we have a speaking acquaintance? Oh dear, I wish I might have tied a ribbon about her neck or set a strawberry mark on her left arm so that I might know her again, but now she has gone, and I may never see her again. It shall not be so with my sixteen-year-old self. This minute, this very minute, will I sit down, and write out a description of myself as a passport to the acquaintance of my future selves. Then, when I am seventeen and eighteen there will be no excuse for not recognizing this chrysalis self, even if it does seem a baby grub. I will do it at once before any one is stirring."

Sixteen Years to Eighteen Years.

DEAR OLD EIGHTEEN NAN, — I got the start of you. You may think you are old, but you don't

feel half as old as I do. Sixteen is an age of great responsibility. You feel it all over. The top of your head feels it first, and the hair seems to bristle to go up, and the gray matter of your brain that has been rose-color is beginning to turn blue in preparation for growing into the solid gray matter that works on the wisdom-teeth first and then on the rest of the body.

Then there is the question of long skirts or short skirts, and high heels or low ones, and, old Eighteen, you have got used to all these difficulties, and take them as a matter of course, but I can tell you it is no joke to settle them for yourself, as I have to with a great show of independence, when there is your sister Marian always ready with a wet blanket to throw over your notions of dress reform. And then, Eighteen, there are the boys! Those boys are the light of my eyes, and I would rather be one of them than the belle of Newport decked out with all the gewgaws of fashion.

No doubt, Eighteen, you prefer gewgaws. Such is your sense. You will turn up your nose at your sixteen-year-old self, but you have got to recognize her good points. To begin with, Eighteen, I can almost turn myself around in my

clothes, like Munchausen's horse that turned himself hindside before in his harness. Now, old Eighteen, you can't do that. Then there are my boots over there in the corner; you won't be able to see them because they will be worn out by the time you get along. Rob says, as three feet make a yard, I have to buy my feet by the yard, for they are long enough and broad enough for a square yard. Well, they are meant for walking, tramping, not mincing along like a Chinese high-class maiden. And there are my hats. There are four of them, — one hangs on each corner of my bed. That one at the northwest corner in its best estate was a hammock hat, and it still retains some of its pristine elegance, despite three rows of flies and no end of hooks. That hat knows all the secrets of the deep; trout, perch, bass, and pickerel, all fear it. Then that somewhat-the-worse-for-wear tam o'shanter is the joy of my life. It has no set ways, but will stay just anywhere it is put, over my left ear, or over my right ear, on the back of my head, or the tip of my nose, although this last position is kept by my white yachting cap, that rather boyish-looking object at the northeast. That was really Lewis's, and consequently has a dandyish air.

He outgrew it before he wore it out and gave it to me as a philopena. That object at the south-east corner covered with a large pocket-handkerchief is my this year's sailor. Marian bought it in Boston, so it is very correct as to its crown and brim and I never wear it if I can help it. It is needless to say Marian covers it so it won't get spoiled by moth and rust, for she says if I will set my hats up in sight like the saints of Louis Eleventh, she is going to preserve one in Puritan decency.

There, old Eighteen, will you dare say that you won't know me, when you have so good a description of my favorite articles of dress? As to my dresses, you will blush for shame over them and think of me as a poor relation. Over there in the corner is my wardrobe on six hooks, and covered with a calico curtain. There is my old blue serge for every day, my new red serge for best, my dark blue duck for warm days, and my white duck for Sundays. Very much like a boy's wardrobe, only my clothes have to be made with skirts, — more's the pity! I hate frills, but mother made me wear a white muslin to the regatta dance, and I had to confess that I felt more comfortable in it where there were other girls.

Can you get your wardrobe into such a compact space, old Eighteen?

Well, now for the old girl herself! Here she is! Big teeth! They always seem to have been big ever since I pulled out the first dear little white ones with a string tied around the door handle. Mother said I would grow to them, but I haven't though I am five feet five, tall enough for sixteen. I hope, old Eighteen, you won't be two inches bigger. Think what a giantess you will be! five feet seven! Then my hair is molasses candy just streaked like that, half-pulled and twisted! My eyes, well, they are just like yours, so I guess you will know them. My mouth is large, — has to be to cover those teeth, but it is not so bad, I believe. As to my nose; in summer it is generally dusted with freckles or powdered with whitish scales of burnt skin, just like the boys'. It is a badge of camp life. Can't help it unless I make a slave of myself to ointments, cold cream, or sour milk.

No doubt, your nose, Eighteen, is quite perfection, but you won't have half so good a time, for you will spend so many hours taking care of it, that you 'll never go rowing or sailing without a veil and a shade hat. Poor thing! I am sure you are quite miserable!

Well, now there is the shell. No doubt, you are quite ashamed of me. My manners are shockingly bad, though papa says my heart is all right. I am generally obedient, but Marian says I always have my own way. I have several absorbing interests, — the boys, my boat, and my violin. I don't read much in the summer time, but in the winter I read all the books I can find. My favorite books, old Eighteen, I suppose you will despise for you are probably reading everything I can't bear. I have not half finished my letter of introduction to you, but I guess you will know me, however, and I won't let you cut my acquaintance.

You detestable creature, I am sure the boys won't like you half as well as they do me, and life won't be half as full of fun for you as for

Your sixteen-year-old self,

NAN.

Having written this remarkable letter to her future self, Nan folded it carefully, took from a safe corner a little old writing-desk, which having belonged to Aunt Anne, had been given to her as a namesake, unlocked

it with pride in its key which turned upon all her few treasures that were now to be enriched by this precious document. A small fragment of ancient sealing wax, and a small seal bearing the letter "R," lay in one small compartment of the desk, and seemed to await this dedication, for since it had come into Nan's possession it had never been used, as Nan was not like Marian, a sentimental letter-writing girl, and she would have scorned to seal a letter written to the boys, who were her chief correspondents. But to a young lady of eighteen, so important a letter as this could be most properly sealed; so with great ceremony she lighted her small candle, burnt her fingers with the wax a few times, and finally succeeded in dropping a seal as large as the royal signet on her precious missive, then laid it carefully away, locked her desk once more, and proceeded to dress hastily.

"There's one resolution broken, I fear,

for I was to dress with great care after I was sixteen," said Nan, taking down from her looking-glass a long, narrow strip of cardboard on which were written carefully sixteen resolutions, numbered systematically.

Resolved,

1 That I will be more careful in dressing.
2 That I will be more patient with Marian.
3 That I will try to like sewing.
4 That I will help mother more.
5 That I will be more generous to Marshall.
6 That I will be more helpful to Lewis.
7 That I will give up wishing for a bicycle, since father cannot afford it.
8 That I will stay at home from the tramp this year if mother objects to my going.
9 That I will teach Sheldon to tell the truth by love, not fear.
10 That I will make Harry less of a coward by telling him of brave deeds.
11 That I will be less conceited.
12 That I will cultivate my manners, as well as my muscles.

13 That I will try not to waste my time on the lake too much.
14 That I will make up for all the time I waste by hard study next winter.
15 That I will be gentle with Robbie.
16 That I will not forget to say my prayers in the morning.

Having read these over, Nan knelt down and said her prayers, then went down stairs and appeared in the kitchen with a bright "Good morning, mamma. I am going to help you get breakfast."

"A very good birthday resolution, my daughter," said her mother kissing her, "and one which I will not spoil by refusing."

Nan had told the family that she wished no birthday presents this year. As Marian was to be married next month, the paternal pocketbook would suffer draft enough, so that she had no expectation of any gifts when they all gathered at the table with

greetings for the sixteen-year-old daughter and sister; but Rob looked wise and papa pleased as he said: —

"No presents, dear, you know; a few birthday cards from the boys by and by."

But to the boys, Nan's birthday was one of the red-letter days of the summer, not to be dimmed in its glory by any wedding preparations, and at nine o' clock a long file of irrepressible youths wound their way up the path to the cabin to pay their respects and present their offerings.

Nan had enjoyed these birthday greetings, but there had been very little variation in them for the past three years, each boy giving her a book, in uniform covers, comprising often a whole set of some favorite author, beginning with Miss Alcott and ending with Dickens.

To-day, however, there was a decided change in the aspect of affairs. Although

it was early in the day, each boy was arrayed in his Sunday best, and led by Marshall, each bore in his hand some mysterious package tied daintily with blue ribbon.

Nan felt the atmosphere charged with something new, and moved, perhaps by the self-consciousness of sixteen, or the approach of an unusual ordeal, contrary to her usual behavior on these occasions, rushed up to her own room, calling for Robbie, who did not or would not answer.

"Oh, Rob, the boys are all dressed up."

But master Robert had his own affairs to attend to, and Nan was forced to rush to Marian.

"Oh, Marian, do go and see the boys! They are coming up here, all dressed up."

"Well," said Marian, "the boys come to see you always on your birthday; they do not come to see me."

"Yes, but to-day they are dressed up."

Marian laughed. "I 'll send Rob," and soon Nan heard laughter on the veranda, and Rob's step on the stair, and then at her door.

"Nan, open the door," at the same time pushing it open himself.

"Robert Falconer Ratcliffe, what have you done to yourself, and what have you got there?" for there stood Mr. Robert, as black as the ace of spades, holding a tray full of visiting cards. Making a mock salaam to Nan, he deposited the cards in Nan's lap, and said: —

"Gemmans to see Miss Ratcliffe, no, Miss Anne Ratcliffe!"

"Tell the 'gemmans' there is n't any such person. No, I 'll come down and see what 's the fun. They are up to something!"

There they stood in a demure circle, each holding his hat in one hand behind him, in the other a parcel tied with blue ribbon. As Nan entered the circle, they shouted in

one voice, "Many happy returns of the day," and laid the parcels at her feet.

Nan could only sit down in the midst and proceed to untie the bundles, which brought a protest from Wolcott.

"There! Nan is a little girl, after all. You all said she was a young lady to-day," and with that he seated himself beside her, followed by four of the younger boys, while the older ones maintained their dignified attitudes, standing.

But the little ones assisted her to open her parcels, which disclosed: first, sixteen lovely roses from Cousin Hal with "To my queen rose in the rosebud garden of girls," written on a card.

"Oh, cousin Hal, they are lovely, but I am only a tomboy, — roses are for Marian."

The next parcel was a box of bonbons from Lewis with "Sweets to the sweet!"

"You are just too bad, Lewis, to make game of me; but I'll share with Wolcott."

A manicure set of daintiest ivory, a tiny mirror, a box of delicate note-paper, and card-case, were the expressions of satire from the older boys, upon whom Nan turned most withering glances.

"You have all made a mistake; these are for Miss Eighteen. I will tie them all up in a parcel, and put them away for two years. Oh, here are some treasures from my boon companions; a set of paper dolls from Harry, and a tennis racket from Wolcott, more candy from Crawford, and a dear little pocket-knife from Sheldon!

"These things for Miss Eighteen shall be tied up again and marked, and when I meet Miss Eighteen I 'll give them to her.

"I am expecting some old friends down on the shore for a corn-roast at eleven o'clock, and some good fellows to sail to the creek at four. If you see them anywhere, I wish you 'd mention it to them. They

are a good lot, but they don't wear fine clothes. Just look them up, and send them over in sweaters and knickerbockers to join a tomboy they 'll find there."

"Good for Nan! She is the same old girl, after all. None of your nonsense about Nan!" and the boys threw off their dignity and up their caps, and making a circle about Nan, joined in the camp cry: —

"Hi! Ki! Yah! Yah!" and "Lora MacCoy."

"Now for the corn-roast, boys! Off to the pavilion and get out of these togs. We might have known Nan would have thought us sillies," and they rushed off to their boats in very different order from that in which they had come.

But Nan, left sitting with her gifts on the floor, put her head into her hands and burst into tears. "I am sure they half meant it. I 'll soon be growing up, and all my fun will be over."

"Nan, Nan!" called Robbie half an hour later, "there 's an express package over at the station for you. Jonas says it 's as big as a carriage, and papa says you are to go over with him and open it at the farm, for it can't come over in the boat."

"More surprises. What can it be?"

"As big as a carriage, open at the house. It must be mother's sewing machine that went to Boston to be repaired. There is n't anything coming for me."

Both Rob and papa looked very wise as they rowed to the mainland, and Nan began to doubt if it was mamma's sewing machine after all. Leaving the boat, they walked to the farm where Jonas was ready to drive to the station, a mile drive, which they made in good time, Nan's eagerness seeming to give wings to the horse.

"Jonas, you know what it is; why won't you tell me?" said Nan.

"Secrets is secrets, especially birthday

ones," answered the discreet man-of-all-work.

"It is, it is! — a bicycle!" cried Nan as they at last reached the station, where, leaning with unmistakably superior air against the side of a most dilapidated old building was a "Safety" of latest mould, its delicate framework peeping here and there through the careful boxing, tantalizing Nan to the extreme.

"A real 'Safety,' papa! how good of you! and for me. Yes, it is marked, Miss Anne Ratcliffe, Chicopee, N. H. That is surely for me and no one else; but here is another one for Harry Prince, and a big box besides, for me, from a tailor in New York. Oh, papa, can it be from Mrs. Prince?"

"Yes, my dear; she left the order before she went abroad, so that you would be sure to be ready for the September pilgrimage, and Harry is to go too, if you go!"

"Oh, papa, that is just too good to be true! But what is in my tailor box?"

"That can go over in the boat and be opened at the cabin; but these wheels must be left at the barn with the others. Jonas will open yours, and Harry can come up this afternoon and see his."

Owing to the limited space and rough roads of the camp island, the bicycles, of which most of the boys owned one, were stored at the farmhouse, and used only for the long excursions which were made during the summer.

Robbie's eyes glistened a little as he looked back from time to time at the two cumbersome boxes in the back of the wagon, and Nan surprised one of these glances.

"Never mind, old fellow, you can use mine, and I know Harry will lend you his sometimes, and perhaps another year you'll get one."

"That's all right," said Rob, bravely;

the limitations of poverty and a delicate constitution having made him a patient, long-suffering little lad.

It was a perfect beauty — Nan's Safety, — for Mrs. Prince, who was princely by name and nature, too, had not stinted her order, and the wheel was perfect in model and finish, and as Nan had long ago taught herself to ride on the various machines used by the boys, the new bicycle was in no danger of being injured by experiments of a novice.

"Now for the tailor box!" said Nan, as she left the precious wheel to Jonas's tender mercy, and turned homeward with her added possession.

Marian's practical mind, busy with her own trousseau, said at once: "A bicycle suit, of course! Knickerbockers!"

"Mrs. Prince would n't send Nan knickerbockers, I know," said Mrs. Ratcliffe, as the box, untied and opened, disclosed a bicycle suit of fashionable cut and finish.

"Knickerbockers! Mrs. Prince would not send Nan knickerbockers nor bloomers either! Here they are, though, the real thing, but a skirt to wear over them, some leggins, a Norfolk jacket, and a 'tam' with a feather. For once, Nan, you will look very swell. What will you say to that?"

"I shall say that Mrs. Prince is an angel. I will not neglect the boys a minute. But it is time for the corn-roast. The boys are shouting down at the cave, and Don is barking enough to wake the sleeping smugglers."

"Dear me! sixteen, and such a tomboy!" said Marian, sadly.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PILGRIMAGE.

"JOAN OF ARC at the head of the Armies of France!" cried Lewis, as Nan, arrayed in all the elegant equipment of her new bicycle outfit, started at the head of the bicycle party, one September morning, about two weeks after her sixteenth birthday.

"Joan of Arc on a bicycle, Lewis! for shame! Call me Miss Liberty, rather, or Columbia or Yankee Doodle, for I am nothing if not an American girl up-to-date," Nan retorted.

And she looked nothing so well as the very spirit of liberty and independence, courage, strength, and beauty, for her bicycle suit had an air of jauntiness that was

often wanting her happy-go-lucky clothes, and her gay little tam o'shanter cap, in which a little quill was perched, gave Nan a charming coquetry that foretold a day of real feminity by and by.

Close to her side came Harry Prince, as proud of his right to be Nan's outrider as of his new Safety, and following, two and three abreast, were a dozen or more of the boys, a few of the youngest lads being judged not steady enough for the projected jaunt.

The equipment of the train was heterogeneous and complete, comprising a sporting outfit that suggested a variety in taste and a broad tract of country.

Lewis and James Hale and others, armed with cameras, hockeys, and kodak, Marshall and Steve with fishing-rods; Mr. Ratcliffe and Harold with guns, and the younger lads with the boxes for the collection of those specimens of bugs and grubs, sticks and

stones, plants and fungi which every lad in the secrets of nature loves to gather, told of an expedition that was to unite the ends of science, art, and pleasure.

For the first five miles the course lay through the well worn roads of well known villages, past farmhouses, cottages, and even shanties whose inmates they all knew by name and habit, with whom they exchanged more than one greeting; and more than one greeting was hearty, and would have stayed the travellers in their swift passage, but the steam was up and no time could be lost in mere pleasantry.

For this year, instead of the long pedestrian march through woods and over height of distant hills, the line of advance was to lie towards and through the Gold Forest, so called, not by reason of the gold dust which might be found for the digging, nor gold by reason of the glory of autumnal foliage, but gold because of the measure of good current

coin paid by a multi-millionaire for its vast limits of spruce and fir, maple and oak, chestnut and birch; free to the Indian trapper, free to the Yankee woodman and Canadian fisherman, it no longer was, for it had been bought not by roods and acres, but by square miles, for the pleasure of the sporting millionaire, and where moose and bear, with an occasional panther, had been the only game, fish, flesh, and fowl, of every sort abounded, was bred and cherished for the private use of this modern Crœsus.

By special permit, Mr. Ratcliffe and his party were to traverse the park as far as their courage would take them, and a journey of some adventure was more than anticipated.

The first five miles made almost breathlessly, the party paused at the foot of a hill, to take rest, and to look backwards on their course which lay behind them a serpentine trail through a country sparsely settled, but

richly wooded and gorgeously colored by Nature's hand. To the right, raising its white head above the blue range, shone Mt. Washington, to the south, Kearsarge, and here and there, like diamonds in emerald settings, the lakes of New Hampshire and Vermont, with, off to the west, the silver ribbon of the quiet Connecticut River winding its way through peaceful valleys, — a panorama they all knew in feature and outline, yet which was never the same, touched by the infinite variety of Nature's lights and shadows with a thousand shifting beauties.

"Do you know what I always think of when I look across this vast country, boys, with its mountain horizon and wooded depths?" asked Mr. Ratcliffe.

"Of God," said Harry, looking up to the fleckless blue above his head.

"Well said, little man, but although we always think of God when face to face with a sublime landscape, my thought in this spot

has always been the thought of the Indians whose footsteps for centuries trod these paths, threaded these woods, who fished in these streams and have all passed before or beneath the hand and foot of the white man. Is there not something solemn and sublime in the thought of the lives they led here, before the white man came? Not a trail or track in these woods, but some brave Kearsarge or Merrimac Indian has trod in his day, and the secrets of the hills and streams they knew, we could hardly learn by the aid of all our modern sciences, and yet what is left of them but a handful here and there, of poor men and women, squatters in a land which for centuries was all their own? There to the left, down that path we will soon follow, is a small hamlet, a settlement of Indians, all that is left of a tribe that fought with Philip."

"Oh, papa, while we rest, can't you tell us something of the Indians that used to

live about here? Were they a good tribe or were they wicked?" said Nan, looking westward to where the Connecticut marked the tramping ground of Pequods and Mohicans, and southward to the peaceful lands of Wannalancet and Chocorua.

The boys seconded Nan's request, and grouping themselves under some shady elms, they turned eagerly to their kind friend, who gladly responded to their request on a subject which was especially a hobby of his.

"I cannot say to your question, Nan, that the Indians of this region were not ever malicious or hostile, but as a whole they were less inclined to hostility than the more southern tribes or those to the west of the Connecticut, and it is more to our shame that they were often betrayed by the white man. Almost this very spot is part of a large estate given to the English by an Indian Sachem, called Seguin, who made it

his only condition that he and his kin should be protected. The white man, however, ungrateful, drove him from even the bit of land he had reserved for himself, and the Indian resentment being aroused, he secured the aid of some of the Pequods, who were always ready to avenge their own and others' wrongs, took advantage of a day when the farmhouses were deserted, set fire to many, captured two white girls and killed nine.

"That may be said to be the only outrage, and that not unprovoked. How do you look at it yourselves, boys? Do you think they were justified in what they did?"

"From their point of view, perhaps they were, Mr. Ratcliffe. You see they had given their land freely without pay, to the Englishman, believing in his good faith to protect them. But when the white man threw them off, they knew of no way to avenge themselves but treachery," said Marshall.

"I should just like to have been there, — would n't I have given it to 'em, when they ran off with those girls!" said Harry, looking at Nan, as though in his mind's eye, he even now saw the tomahawk of an Indian circling around her tawny locks.

"There was poor old Chocorua, too. Don't you remember last year, papa, when we tramped down in that direction, you told us about him?" said Nan.

"Tell it again Mr. Ratcliffe, I have almost forgotten about it," said Lewis.

"Poor old Chocorua! Do you remember the beautiful mountain and lake by that name? Well, that was called by the name of a small tribe who dwelt there, — the last one of the race becoming a hermit, who took refuge on the mountain and was found one day by a white hunter, who shot him in cold blood. Dying, the poor old Sachem cursed the country, and many superstitious people account for a sort of distemper which

attacks cattle that graze there, as the direct result of that curse. More scientific people, however, regard it as caused by the mineral waters."

"Let us see how many names we can remember, for fun," said Nan, "they are so pretty. There's Pemigawasset, Passaconaway and Pennacook and Wannalancet!"

"Poor Wannalancet! There's another victim of English treachery," said Harold. "Don't you remember, boys, how Major Waldron took advantage of the peaceful attitude of his tribe to decoy many of them to Dover and then sell them as slaves, to be shipped from Portsmouth? Wannalancet himself was released and he with a handful of men returned to their village, but his heart was never the same. He felt sore, and yet was too peaceful and gentle to fight the white man, so one night like the Arab, 'he folded his tent and silently stole away,' to live with the tribes of Canada."

"Did you ever hear how the Narragansetts, the Sasoits, the Pequods, and the Mohicans chose their god?" said Steve, whose near-sighted eyes had been viewing the landscape o'er, in a drawling tone which Nan always said was especially fitted for his chosen calling.

"No, tell us, Steve," said Jimmie, stretching himself on a soft bit of turf, "and I will take a nap."

"Now I call that a delicate compliment, but don't mind a little thing like that, Steve. Fire away!" said Ernest, proceeding to follow Jimmie's example.

"The Pequods and the Narragansetts and the Sasoits were gathered together, so the legend runs, to determine the strength of their good and evil spirits, when the Pequods said they would call upon their Good Spirit, to show his favor and power. So they all formed a ring and called upon their Good Spirit, and waited breathlessly for a sign.

Soon came a sound like the soughing of the wind among the trees; nearer and nearer it came, till in the branches of trees above their heads, a being, huge, something like a bat, descended, bearing a monstrous thing, for which they then had no name. Down in their midst it came, laying its burden at their feet.

"'A wigwam!' they cried, but the thing was again caught up and borne to the nearest water where it floated like a live duck. The Canoe was the gift of the Good Spirit.

"'It is the best gift, with it we can flee from our enemies and join our friends. What can the Evil Spirit offer?' Again there was silence, and again a rustling, this time not from above, but from below and in their midst appeared a demon-like creature bearing slender arrows tipped with poison and broad bows. With a yell, Pequods, Narragansetts, Sasoits fell upon their gifts.

"'Ah, these are still better than the

canoe, for with these we can slay man and beast.'

"It was then the turn of the other tribes to call upon their Spirits, and the Narragansetts called upon their Good Spirit, who sent to earth a rain of corn. 'Hominy,' cried they, 'is the gift of the Good Spirit; without food we would have no strength to paddle canoes or shoot bows and arrows.'

"Then came the Evil Spirit with arms full of a broad leaf which he showed his people how to use, filling long pipes and lighting them. 'Bacca! Bacca! 'T is the gift that makes us forget to be hungry, makes us in peace with our neighbors. Bacca is the best.'

"Then came the Sasoits, and said, 'Our Good Spirit can give us nothing better, but the white man comes with a gift that makes fire in the brain and blood. Fire-water! put fire-water in the mouth and there will be fury in the veins, and we can kill our enemies, pillage, murder. Fire-water is the

gift of the white man. Fire-water is from the white man's Good Spirit and Bad Spirit.'"

"Alas, it was fire-water which in truth destroyed the strength of the Indians. It was the worst gift he could have chosen. In giving him fire-water, the English knew only too well that they had put poison in their mouths to steal away their brains," said Mr. Ratcliffe, rising and looking at his watch. "Come, boys, we must be off if we are to reach the Count's by twelve o'clock."

"The dear old Count! Does he expect us, papa?" said Nan.

"Yes, I sent word to him by Farmer Gould last week that we would lunch with him to-day."

Up hill and down dale once more, for ten miles farther until there came in sight a solitary and singular structure that was set on a hill so high and set around so thickly with trees that the party were glad to dismount

and walk, guiding their wheels through the thick maze.

"I always think of the 'Bishop of Bingen in his round tower on the Rhine,' when I look at the Count's queer fortress," said Lewis.

"Just hold my machine a minute, Ernest, will you? I want to catch the view of it through the clearing. The vines have grown since last year, and all he needs is a moat to make it look like a castle. I 'll take a snap just here. If the old fellow would only come out with his ''cello,' it would be perfect."

"That is the best view we have had, is n't it?" said Lewis, turning to Nan; but Nan was lost in thought and dreams, and her usually clear eyes were swimming in tears, for just here Nan touched the border of dreamland, and left the everyday, workaday world behind. It was as though she herself were a fairy princess, embowered and asleep

in the queer round tower on the hill, and this girl of the outer world was come to call her back to life.

Indeed Nan's inner self was held very fast in that round tower on the hill, as we will soon see. Hal took from his travelling pack a long fish-horn used at camp to summon the boys to meals, and blowing one long blast, waited and watched for a sign from the tower. They had not long to wait, for soon there appeared on the low archway that served as a gate and doorway, two quaint, queer old-world figures. The elder a man not older than forty-five, with the narrow pointed beard and cut of hair of the days of the cavaliers. He wore a short velveteen jacket and corduroy knickerbockers. Beside him stood an odd short figure, with a countenance that was a combination of Esquimaux and Cossack; he wore a long woollen garment, a combination of jersey sweater and smock, a pair of

baggy trousers, high boots, and a peaked cap of odd colors.

Both men waved their hands gayly to the travellers, and several of the younger boys rushed wildly up, leaving their machines in the bushes, shouting, "Ivan, Ivan!" circling about the little peasant in a gay fanfare which amused and delighted him.

"Welcome, a thousand times welcome," said the elder man, extending his hands to Mr. Ratcliffe and Hal as they advanced.

"Ah, my little one grown so great and so beautiful," taking Nan's two hands in his and looking proudly and fondly at her strong young face and figure. "And the music, — our violin, does it suffer? The winter will come again and the young men will go; then we will have music."

"Master Lewis, how goes the pictures? This is the little brother; a brave boy to march so far. Come in! come in! we are ready for you. Ivan has prepared the table

in the woods. Our little rooms are too small for so many of you, but come in."

The boys waited for no second invitation but entered the quaint dwelling, where this singular man lived by himself with this one servant alone.

A Russian of good birth, he had escaped Siberia, but had found exile in this lonely place, not only tolerable but pleasant. Some five years previous to the opening of our story, he had sought this spot and built a lodge, where he lived an odd existence, surrounded not only by the necessities but many of the luxuries of life, for in the circular room which was the ground apartment every sort of musical instrument was found, except a piano, and shelves of books of many languages, pencils and paint brushes, and a hunting equipment for Nimrod. Leading from this central room was a wooden outhouse where Ivan, the servant cooked. It was to this room the little boys had followed

Ivan, whose queer ways and grotesque appearance was always an amusement to them.

Three years before, Mr. Ratcliffe had been driving in his sleigh in the neighborhood of this queer habitation, and saw this odd little figure flying distractedly along the road, muttering an unintelligible jargon. He stopped and asked the man who he was and what his trouble; and learned that his master had fallen and broken his leg and was lying by the roadside, unable to move. It took Mr. Ratcliffe but a short time to take in the situation, and to see that left to himself in that secluded spot, miles from a doctor, the poor Count would be helpless for months. So, ignoring his protests he carried him to his own home, where through several weeks of suffering Mrs. Ratcliffe cared for the poor man, who richly repaid her by teaching Nan the violin, and opening up to the little girl a new world of music and poetry.

Not content with teaching during those weeks of confinement, he would make the journey through the spring and fall, twice a week, to add to her knowledge, and when another winter came, Mr. Ratcliffe persuaded him to abandon his lodge and to come to Chicopee, which he would indeed have been loth to do had he not been bound to Nan by ties of tender affection and love of music.

He was a curious character, Count Lodoff, and had it not been for Nan's sturdy American common sense, his extravagant praise of her talent and admiration might well have turned her head.

To spend a night at the Count's Hermitage was one of the events of the pilgrimage, uniting the delights of Swiss Family Robinson with the pleasures of a season of symphony concert.

To begin with, there was always the rare sport of stowing themselves away, finding sleeping room in odd corners for small boys,

and erecting bivouacs around Ivan's fire for the larger ones who enjoyed the sleeping out-of-doors like true children of the forest.

For Nan there was always the Count's own room, which seemed for the occasion to take on a surprising grace of knick-knack and luxury which Nan herself clothed with a great deal of sentiment, fancying them souvenirs of the days when there was a Countess of whom the Count never spoke.

After the supper, eaten under the trees, there was a huge log fire kindled in the Den, and the Count unlocked his musical cabinet, and each boy had his choice of quaint and queer musical instruments, upon each and all of which the Count could make music such as no one else could.

It was from this store that Nan's own violin had come, and there were still two others left, and a 'cello of marvellous tone, upon which the Count himself played, insist-

ing that Nan should accompany him on a violin, and that Lewis and Hal should take oboe and flute. Then there was music, and the old owls in the oaks and the night-hawks hovering over the old rookery could scarce believe their ears, and fell to belaboring each other, in search of an imaginary enemy.

And when the music was over there were such tales of wolves in Russia, and every species of horror and fancy for which the Count's memory and imagination could find extraordinary language, and then when it was bed time, the Count was so weaned from his hermit ways, that he could not make up his mind to say good-bye to them in the morning, but decided to join them in their trip to the Gold Forest.

So they said good night and dreamed, the boys of great fights with wild beasts, and Nan of foreign countesses imprisoned in wonderful towers.

And when morning came, and when breakfast was eaten of porridge and milk, which Ivan had walked two miles to get, — they all set out again.

"We are to leave our wheels at the Sign of the Red Oak Inn," said Mr. Ratcliffe, by which somewhat fanciful name a certain old tavern on the high road was called. "There we have the turnpike stage for the day to make our tour of the Forest."

"Oh, papa," said Nan, "I thought we could go with our bicycles all the way."

"As far as the roads go we could, my dear, but upon writing for my permit, I learned that it was not safe to risk going through on our wheels, as there are so many untamed animals, who might easily take fright and destroy us perhaps, and injure themselves. On no account, except self-defence, are we to shoot or chase any of the beasts. We go as visitors only, but not as guests. The coach horses know the

track and are not likely to be over frightened by moose or buffalo."

"And are we to see a real buffalo?" said Harry, his courage for the expedition waning somewhat.

"Perhaps; it is possible that we may go through without seeing anything larger than a woodchuck," said Hal. "I knew some men who went through there in the summer and did not hear or see any big game; but we will hope for better luck."

"Or worse," said Marshall, with a laugh.

"On the contrary, I knew some fellows who had the luck to run into a huge cow-moose that nearly tore them to pieces."

"Well, we won't get up any bugbears; we are in search of adventure, but not damage," said Mr. Ratcliffe.

It was about ten when they reached the Inn, and the coach horses, four heavy-limbed creatures with clumsy harnesses were soon harnessed to the great lumbering coach,

which until the new railroad had laid its tracks last year, was the only conveyance to the neighboring town twelve miles away.

The boys were familiar with its pitching and rolling gait, as the horses plunged down and up hill. There is no gait like that of stage horses with their four generally spavined knees, their swollen necks and snorting breath. Four of them, each straining, tugging, tossing their heads and working their limbs, are like no other locomotive power in the world, and the lightly-hung great coach rolls through the deep roads as a great ship rides the deep sea. There is an exhilaration, an excitement with it all, that overcomes all discomforts and fear.

Now up, now down, the clouds yonder melting into mountains, as our visual impressions are shaped by the uneven motion. The trees going swiftly by like grenadiers in a fight, or toppling over like ruffians on a

spree. Then all at once the old stage horses all a-foam and out of breath, settle down to an even run, and then to an even pace, refusing to run except over hills. Then the woods come to their own again, and we can count the birch in its varying tones, from brown to white, and see the golden line of the dodder as it threads the oak, and even the fairy print of the delicate maidenhair fern; and the chestnut-burrs all ready to burst.

The four great horses from the Sign of the Red Oak were used from long habit to make good time with the county mail-bag, and finding themselves once more hitched to their life-long companion, the coach, after a season of separation, caused by that hostile innovation, the railroad, they made good use of the union of forces, and tore like the steeds of Phaethon when that young man undertook to drive the sun for his ancient father Helios.

For a time the ride promised to rival all the famous rides in history, from John Gilpin's on his wedding day to Sheridan's at Winchester; but their usual distance travelled, the old fellows looked around with surprise for the railroad station, and found instead a huge postern gate, through which their unwilling heads were still turned, and beyond, a track, a long and narrow road, at which they sniffed. They had once on a time taken that road before. Beside and beyond its innocent looking borders lay ambushed queer things, with horns that horses did not love, but there was no resisting the lash of a practised driver's whip, and in they plunged. This time, however, not with the confidence of animals on a home run, but suspiciously like steeds around a circus tent.

The Count's thin nostrils dilated as he turned toward Mr. Ratcliffe with a sophisticated smile, saying: —

"Now for some sport."

Mr. Ratcliffe, however, had the responsibility of a precious cargo, and he said in an undertone to the driver : —

"Is there likely to be trouble ?"

"Not a leetle bit," said the wary John. "My team, you see, is like women, skeery o' things they don't see, but brave as lions before the enemy. They 'll sniff for a while, till they get used to the scent o' wild game, but if a wild elk stood right in the path ahead of us they would n't kick nor run one peg. That 's my team. Cheer up, Suke and Sal, Dan and Dave." For by these classic names the old wagoner hailed his steeds, and true to their reputation, after sniffing awhile the air of the game park, they settled down to a quiet jog trot, as though quite satisfied there was to be no formidable foe in the outing.

Their confidence seemed to be warranted. For a mile or two there was no sight nor

sound of any living creature, save the birds and chipmunks that chirruped in the trees, or the gurgling of a brook or stream that fell over the rocks below.

"Whist! Shoo! Oh! See there," suddenly in various tones of surprise and delight, came from the lips of a dozen boys, when all at once at a bend in the road, a huge antlered head appeared thrust through the branches of a broad oak. The horses came to a standstill. Three boys with kodaks sprang down from the coach-top into the road; they were Lewis, Marshall and Hal.

"Now for a shot, boys," whispered Hal in a low voice.

The great monarch of the forest heard, and sprang backward quickly as if to flight, and the boys ran in pursuit, thinking only of their cameras, and the chance to take a dozen rapid shots at the great Wahpeta. But the stag, as though conscious of his advan-

tage, suddenly wheeled about and charged upon them. Lewis, always intrepid, kept the van, his black kodak swinging high to get the range of the creature's head. Hal and Marshall called: —

"Lewis, for mercy's sake, keep out of his range; he will gore you in a second."

The older boys stationed themselves behind trees, and saw with horror Lewis's danger, of which the lad himself was wholly unmindful. All at once the beast seemed to loom over his head, his eyes wild, his breath hot and labored. Lewis dodged quickly behind a tree near by, but Mr. Stag was in the flash of an eye on the other side. Lewis, keeping his nerve, dodged to the other, holding his huge enemy at bay for some seconds, while Hal and Marshall stood spellbound by his pluck. Their positions were some paces off, and out of close range with the animal.

"We must call him off and give Lewis a

chance to run," said Hal, and he gave a low call, known to hunters as the cow-call, at which the stag turned from his quarry, and Marshall cried: —

"Run, Lewis, for the coach."

In ten seconds Lewis scrambled up the back of the coach, and was welcomed warmly by the coach party.

It was then the turn of the other boys to escape, for the Wahpeta had turned but for a moment, and would soon give chase to them. Marshall then had recourse to a little trick which he had often used for the amusement of the boys, and called ventriloquism to his aid. A sound of dogs in the distance caused the beast to wheel about and fly into the farther depths of the forest, and the young men walked back to the coach somewhat elated by their narrow escape.

"He was a wild one and not used to cameras. By the way, Lewis, you dropped

yours there in the woods. Here it is. I guess you may like to keep that slide as a souvenir of a pretty narrow escape."

"'T was a pretty close shave, was n't it though?" said Harold.

The drive for the next hour was uneventful, until they neared an open space like a meadow, at the bottom of which a clear stream of water ran.

"There 's where the big fellows pasture and drink," said the driver pointing with his whip to a black mass of moving objects approaching in the distance.

"Let 's wait and see them go down," said Nan, curious and eager for the advance of the buffalo herd.

"I dunno 's I 'd stay too long till they gets too near; the horses ain't over fond o' them woolly critters. Speaking distance is too near fer them. Ef you can get 'em close enough to them instruments o' yours to take their likeness without feeling their

wind or seeing their eyeballs, I reckon that's near enough," said the Jehu, chuckling over the recent adventure.

"Quite near enough indeed have they come, boys! Get your cameras mounted, and snap, then we will be off," said Mr. Ratcliffe, nervously, and the boys were not anxious for another encounter, especially where they were forbidden to use their guns or pistols. On they came, the great, clumsy creatures, pawing the ground and tossing their manes. Not near enough for danger, the horses halted and the boys took a dozen views of the wild herd, and the coach passed on to a peaceful, quiet path, close on to the eastern border of the forest.

"If you've a mind to get down here, there ain't a mite o' danger. Over yonder is the lodge-house and a couple of keepers near by. The wildest creatures seldom come so far," said their guide.

"Oh, papa, let us eat our lunch here, and

walk a little, for we are quite cramped with sitting so long," suggested Nan.

The whole party seconded Nan's proposal, and they all clambered down from the top of the coach, and proceeded to take out from the coach, guns, boxes, and baskets.

"Why take out your guns?" asked Ernest of Marshall.

"It is just as well to be armed at the edge of a wood known to be the habitation of wild beasts," said Marshall, looking very fierce at the younger lad.

To Nan and the Count fell the arrangement of luncheon, and when it was spread, all gathered around, voraciously hungry after their long ride.

A number of the boys then begged permission to reconnoitre the vicinity, and Mr. Ratcliffe and Hal accompanied them, while Marshall and the Count remained with Nan to gather up the remnants of the feast.

The Count, who was not so well adapted to such jaunts as his young friends, soon stretched himself under the trees for a nap, and Marshall and Nan gave themselves up to the delights of the situation in good comradeship.

The voices of the exploring party had died away in the distance; the jovial coachman having loosed his horses, had betaken himself to the vacant compartment of the coach where he slept peacefully. The utter stillness was all at once broken by a cry like that of a child.

"Oh, Marshall, Harry! He is hurt!" cried Nan, and with that she followed the sound into the thicket. Marshall, impelled by some apprehension, seizing his gun, pursued her till a sight met his eyes which for a moment froze his blood — Nan running straight under the boughs of a tree where, crouched to spring, sat a wild cat of ugliest mien.

"SHE FOLLOWED THE SOUND INTO THE THICKET."

"Nan, stop! Look! lie down," he cried wildly; "I am going to shoot."

In a second, he had taken aim, and the creature fell in a lifeless mass beside Nan, who but then realized her peril and Marshall's presence of mind. For a second her heart seemed to stop, and her lips paled, as Marshall ran to lift her to her feet; then she laughed and said: —

"A trophy for you, Marshall. Isn't it a beauty? What stripes! It is almost as large as a panther. My life wouldn't have been worth much a minute later. Oh, Marshall, I haven't thanked you, I was so proud of your prize."

"Which prize?" said Marshall.

Just then, the shouts of the returning party forbade an answer, and Marshall was the hero of the hour, Nan, the petted idol, more precious than ever for her narrow escape.

The days that followed were uneventful,

but the happiest days, like the happiest nations, have no history, and they returned to camp on the sixth day with bugs and birds, snakes and skins and stones galore, as souvenirs of the joyous pilgrimage, and the Count's promise to visit the camp the following week for an important occasion.

CHAPTER XIII.

BISHOP'S DAY.

THE Pilgrimage was but the beginning of the end, for the camp was even then showing signs of breaking up, a few of the younger lads returning to city schools, but a goodly number were still to remain for Bishop's Day and Marian's wedding, which was to take place on that special Sunday marked by the coming of the good Bishop to officiate for Mr. Ratcliffe in the Oak Grove Chapel.

It had required some courage on Marian's part to forego all the so-called essentials of a wedding, but after Herbert's accident, as little excitement as possible for him was deemed prudent. Marian had but lately an-

nounced to her father her intention of being married in the camp Chapel, whereat he had remarked: —

"It is a great deal more like Nan than like you, Marian."

"Oh, you always think Nan will do the heroic, papa," said Marian, a little bitterly for her.

"Not at all, my dear, but Nan hates fuss and feathers, you know, and it would require less heroism for her to give up wedding furbelows than for you. So you see, it is really you who are heroic. The boys, however, will make your wedding a thing of beauty, for their music is beautiful this year. The chapel is beginning to take on the glorious autumn tints, and I could wish nothing better for you and Herbert than to see you married by the good Bishop in our dear Oak Chapel."

But no matter how much Nan disliked furbelows for herself, she desired them for

Marian, and for the tenth time and last, on the Friday before that Sunday which was to be the wedding-day, Nan delivered herself of her sentiments to Marian in no measured terms.

"I don't approve of this Sunday wedding at all, with only your Sunday gown on. I think it just no fun. You, Marian, who always go in for things just so, to be married on Sunday without any frills at all!"

"But, Nan, marriage is a sacred sacrament, quite as fitting Sunday as any other day of the week. And I want the Bishop to marry us, and he can't come a hundred miles again. Then, too, Herbert is so relieved, for since his accident, his nerves have not been equal to any kind of excitement such as you would like for our wedding."

"Of course, but no bridesmaids, no maids of honor, no pages! Well, Marian you are a great disappointment to me," said Nan, seating herself on her sister's bed, and sur-

veying her with mingled scorn and amusement.

"If I am a disappointment to you, you are a surprise to me, for I thought this would just suit you who scorn fashion and furbelows," answered Marian, with a tone of oppression, as one who has had all the opposition endurable and feels like the miller in the fable, ready to please anybody for the sake of peace.

"Well, I do despise them for myself, but one has got to live up to one's standard. No one would expect anything regular of me, and no one would be surprised to have me go to Gretna Green to get married. I am a born contradiction. But you never have done anything that was not expected of you in your life. I should think Herbert would think you had changed your spots like a chameleon."

"Now, Nan, you are just talking nonsense. I have done what seemed wisest,

and to balance it, you will probably have all the frills I give up. Such is the irony of fate."

"Then I shall have to change my spots."

"Oh, you will," said Marian. "You won't stay fly-away. I would n't be surprised if you developed into quite a sensible woman and married wisely."

"'Sensible woman and married wisely!' Oh, Marian, you are the biggest goose! You can't see anything but marriage for anybody. I don't propose to marry wisely whatever I do. If I am ever wise, I'll not get married at all. But let's not quarrel any more, Marian. After you are married and away, I shall reproach myself for being so hateful to you. As sisters go, you have been very good to me, for I must have been a great trial to you. I don't suppose any sister could have been better. Your mistake was that you were not a brother. If you had been a boy and Robbie a girl, this

family would have been more symmetrical, for Rob is more of a girl than a boy, and I do need an older brother."

Nan paused only for breath, but Marian exclaimed : —

"Anna Ratcliffe! You need an older brother, with all those boys? The trouble is, you have n't more sisters. If I had been the right kind of a sister, you would never have had all those boys dangling — "

It was now Nan's turn to be exasperated, and Marian's words, added to the care with which she was folding gloves and veils in white tissue paper, gave poignancy to Nan's words.

"Dangling! our boys dangling after me! If it had n't been for the boys I should have been a prig or a puny, sentimental girl, whereas, — feel that muscle, Marian Ratcliffe. Do you suppose I shall waste my life in backaches and sideaches? No, thanks to the boys, I have health and

strength, and all the nonsense knocked out of me. No, our boys will never dangle around me."

"Nan!" called the mother's voice.

"Yes, mamma," answered the daughter.

"You are to go over to the camp for Harry and Wolcott to come to tea, and ask Lewis to come when he is ready. Papa says you are to ask no questions and answer none."

"Humph! that's funny," said Nan, flying, however, to do the welcome errand.

It was much easier for the boys to ask questions than for Nan not to make an attempt to answer them, for it was very unusual for Mrs. Ratcliffe to invite the boys to the limited hospitality of the cabin home, except on birthdays, and Wolcott's teasing, Harry's pleading, could not gain any reason for this welcome invitation.

Lewis's "thanks, be most happy," was all

the comment that young man made, although there came into his eyes

> "The light that never was
> On sea or land."

The little cabin never looked more inviting than on that September afternoon when Nan came over from the island with the little Prince boys. The tea-table was set in the room which but for stairs might have been simply the sitting-room, and but for the fireplace would have been only the hall, yet by the common union of modern architectural designs had become the living-room of their island cottage.

It looked now a banquet hall with its nooks and corners glorious with goldenrod, a blue Flemish jar bright with the same fall flowers in the centre of the supper-table, which had all of beauty in glass and china that camp rule allowed, spread bravely over the snowy linen.

Nan thought her mamma more demonstrative than usual in her greeting of the boys, but if she gave it a second thought, fancied the eve of Marian's wedding made them all a bit sentimental.

"I think we will not wait," said Mrs. Ratcliffe, half an hour later, when Lewis had arrived, and Herbert and Mr. Ratcliffe had joined the party.

"Why should we? We are all here," said Robbie.

"And oh, for the strawberry jam and the gay Sally Lunn!" sang Lewis in the measure of Sullivan's "Sorcerer."

"But here is another place, mamma," said Nan, counting the plates as they drew their chairs to the table, plenteously laden with good things.

"Do you expect the Bishop to-night?" asked Mr. Ratcliffe somewhat sadly.

"No; but one must be prepared for wedding guests at any time now," Mrs.

Ratcliffe answered, looking out over the water as if in search of a boat-load of wedding guests.

"The ferry bell did ring about a few minutes ago," said Harry, "and perhaps somebody will come."

"Jonas went over in the 'Worry' for some things," said Mr. Ratcliffe, serving fried chicken somewhat absently, and adding large pieces of milk toast.

"I think Jonas is coming now, papa. There 's his step on the walk," said Robbie, springing to open the back porch door, but just then a light knock at the front door brought Nan to her feet, and a voice so rare and sweet they all knew could be but one, stirred them all.

"Mrs. Prince!" "Mamma! Mamma!" A rush and a happy scream, and three boys seemed at once to be gathered into the soft embrace of a beautiful figure clothed in heavy mourning.

"My boys, I could not wait any longer! I was hungry for you. Lewis, how you have grown, — half a head taller than mamma! And Harry darling, how well you look! Wolcott, my baby, lots of kisses for mamma. Not too tight; there, dear, I must say a word to the others. Dear Mrs. Ratcliffe and the good Don. Marian, almost a bride! Mr. Morton well again? Robbie stronger too, and Nan, my own girlie, going with me?"

Whatever doubt might have lingered in Nan's mind as to her decision, seemed to melt away as this beautiful woman with her caressing voice gathered them all into the spell of her rare presence.

She was so young and fair to look upon, despite the height of her tall boy, and the depth of the shadow cast by her heavy mourning. The hair on her white brow seemed as soft and as golden as Wolcott's baby locks. Her blue eyes were shaded by

lashes that seemed to have caught the diamond dew of a summer morning and her clear red lips, so pure in their closing over white teeth, were like those of a young girl who dreams dreams, and has never known sorrow.

Then there was about her such an air of ease and comfort, fairly radiating a delicious sumptuousness that made every one forget there was a world of flurry and bustle, misery and discomfort.

Of course, one must always say that it is easier to be thus, when one is rich and has not to fret or to work, but so many persons who are rich contrive to make things disagreeable for everybody else, and never think of any one's comfort but their own, that when one finds a rich and beautiful woman who is neither vain nor selfish, but is always thinking of some one else than herself, she is a much rarer person than the poor little woman who has always been sacrificing

herself, and has long since given up yielding to any temptation to do anything else. Not that Mrs. Prince had no trouble of her own. Far from it. Her young husband had been taken from her when she most needed his guidance in the training of their three boys. A baby girl, who would have been the joy of their hearts, had been snatched from her in one short day of terrible illness, and yet she could never make her boys' lives unhappy by grieving, and many were the homes made brighter and sweeter for her smiles; and here she was, showering these smiles without stint, upon them all. The girls and boys too, closed around to aid her in undoing the cloak and bonnet. Nan laid the long veil back lovingly, and took off the small widow's bonnet, that looked so pathetic on the girlish brow, and at last she was led in triumph to a seat between her two boys, Lewis placing himself opposite, where he could gaze to

his heart's content on the loveliest lady in the land as he loved to call her in his gallant fashion.

"Oh, such a weary time it seems since I left you, laddies! Yes, mamma has lots of things in her trunks in Boston for you and everybody. Even your wedding present is there, Marian, but my new maid will bring them up to-morrow to the hotel, where we will wait till Nan is ready to go back with us."

Then all the happenings of the weeks since the last letters were received had to be told, and when at last the tea-things were all set away, and a log lighted on the hearth, Wolcott nestled in his mother's lap, Harry full length at her feet, Lewis with one arm thrown around her shoulder, as he perched beside her chair; the others slipped away to leave the happy group together. But 't was only a few minutes before Mrs. Prince called for Nan, and Harry ran to the kitchen to call her, saying: —

"We must have Nan too; mamma says Nan is going to be our sister this winter," and Nan sat down on the floor too, and watched with Harry the glowing embers of the burning log, until Lewis said, —

"What have you heard from Daisy, mamma?"

"She has been very ill, but there is some hope, — a good deal, I may say."

"Who is Daisy?" Nan asked softly, as she caught the sadness in Mrs. Prince's tone and the sympathy in Lewis's answer.

"Oh, she is one of mamma's little friends," said Lewis a little more gayly. "She has a whole lot of them, you know; but Daisy is the dearest duck of them all, and we are all awfully fond of her. She is a little lame girl with the loveliest hair you ever saw, like a rain of gold falling over her pretty little shoulder; and then her eyes are just like those great brown eyes of the paintings of Murillo."

"Where did you know her, Mrs. Prince?" asked Nan.

Mrs. Prince seemed to be weary, and Lewis went on enthusiastically.

"It was two years ago this Christmas, mamma bought some lovely embroidery and painted fancy articles at the Woman's Exchange. She has a way of asking all about the people who do the work she buys. Lots of her little friends come through the Woman's Exchange. The 'D. G.'s,' I call them. Mamma says 'Dear Girls.' At any rate, Daisy was a prize. Of course the lady of Altruria, — that's what Professor Dean calls my mother, — took Daisy right down to the hospital in the 'Prince Ward,' which you know mamma has endowed in memory of papa and our little sister. There Daisy is undergoing treatment with prospects of getting better."

"Lewis has spoiled my surprise a little, for I want to take you to see little Pearl as

soon as we go home, for I know you, with your strength, will pity and love her," Mrs. Prince said softly, looking down upon Wolcott fast asleep.

"I hope I shall, but you must forgive me if I am strange at first, for you know I am a little afraid of lame persons. When I was a little child papa says I would scream if a lame person came in sight. When we were walking on the street mamma would suddenly feel me clutch her dress, and then turn pale as a sheet at the approach of a lame man. There was a friend of mamma's who had sprained her knee, and had to go on crutches. She was a perfect nightmare to me, and it was several years before I would go near her house, although she had laid aside her crutches. I have gotten over that pretty much, but this summer when Herbert was on crutches, it made me feel horribly to see him lame, not only on his account, but on

my own. It is odd, because papa thinks I am a good nurse, and one of my pet dreams has been to be a trained nurse."

"Oh, not a trained nurse. You, Nan?" said Lewis, to whose æsthetic nature the scientific did not appeal.

"Nan would make one of the best trained nurses imaginable, or even to go a step farther into medicine, if she liked. Lewis, you do not appreciate how rare a gift it is. But that is a long way off. There is much between to fit you for a choice, dear girl, and I hope to help you choose for the best. Lewis shall not let his fancies spoil your usefulness."

"But now, boys, I think you must go back to the Island and leave Wolcott with mamma to-night, for he is too sleepy to rouse."

With a tender good-night, the two older lads took leave of their lovely mamma, and Wolcott was placed in the tower-room which

overlooked the lake, to sleep the happy sleep with dreams which only a mother's kiss can bring. Then Mrs. Prince was carried off by the girls to mother's room to see the bride's dress, a modest girlish affair, which Mrs. Prince, surfeited with the gorgeousness of fashionable dresses, found lovely in its simplicity, and did much to reconcile Nan to the wedding by her sincere and hearty approval.

. . . . . .

The wedding day dawned fair and beautiful, though a soft haze lay over the mountains in the early morn, and the good Bishop who had arrived the night before, and strolled forth to catch some early views of the lake and mountains, found the landscape shrouded in mist when he met Nan, who had rowed over from the cabin to the camp to add one more touch of beauty to the wood chapel before morning service. The Bishop found her with arms laden

with ferns and daisies, goldenrod and asters, threading her way through the woods while the dew was yet wet on the grass, and there was a Sunday morning quiet about the camp that told breakfast was yet unthought of. For Nan, however, Bishop's Day was always sacred and beautiful, and to-day, twice blessed because Marian's wedding-day. Nothing must be spared to make the chapel worthy the day and the deed, and this sacred spot dear to them all, formed by nature's hand for the worship of Nature's God, must be adorned as for Easter or Christmas.

This little chapel, chosen by Mr. Ratcliffe for the fitness of the arching oaks spreading over an open space, had been forced of late to enlarge its boundaries by the building of seats in the denser portions of the grove; for, an ardent churchman, Mr. Ratcliffe had, since the opening of camp, made the observance of church services one of the estab-

lished features of camp-life, and thanks to his earnest efforts to keep the vulgar and idle from gathering in this sacred spot, few came to gape and many to pray. Neighbors and visitors who gathered in numbers on Sundays felt the full beneficence of the service. To-day, not only the boys in snowy surplices, but Nan as well, would sing the choral service; but Nan was to play an offertory on her violin, the Count to add his wonderful music to the whole, and Stephen Whittemore, in his soft languid tones, read the lessons, and the good Bishop bless and crown it all. Together the white-haired old man and the bright-haired girl walked through the woods until before the great boulder which served as altar, and under the great elm, against whose gnarled trunk a rustic cross extended its arms of faith and hope to the open sky, they paused, Nan to lay down her burden of green, the bishop to look up and say :—

"'How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.' My little girl, do you realize how good it is to be here?"

Nan looked up fearlessly, for the Bishop was an old friend; not only had he baptized and confirmed her, but his name was a household word.

"When you are here, I always think of Moses going up into the mountain to talk with God," she said, almost childishly.

"No man may do that to-day face to face, any more than in Moses's time, but we feel nearer to God in the stillness of Nature's forest than in the crowded cities there below; and this visit gives me courage to go on with my work among the heart-sick, poverty-stricken, man-driven masses down there. What a work your father is doing here, teaching their hands the dignity of labor, and their hearts the abhorrence of sin; and you, my daughter, have your work to do

— are doing it nobly and well. They are fine lads and have not spoiled my lassie."

It was not long before they were joined by half a dozen boys, whose strong hands and willing fingers carried on the work of twining the flowers and green into a chancel rail to completion before the breakfast horn called them back to camp.

Then the sun broke out through and above the mist, scattering it into a myriad sun-clouds and shapes, when at last

"Squirrel and song sparrow
High on their perch,
Hear the sweet lily-bell
Ringing to church!"

The little procession of surpliced forms that filed slowly through the woods, sounding the joyful tones of that glorious anthem,

"Hark, hark my soul!
Angelic voices ringing!"

waked the echoes of a sublime pantheism.

It was late that night when Mrs. Prince, in her room at the hotel overlooking the lake, wrote to a friend: —

My Dear: The lake has given me a new picture. You know, sometimes between the dark and the daylight of a winter's day, I have tried to set them free for you, these pictures I have imprisoned in my memory of happy, bright, colorful summer days. I believed my mind, like Lewis's kodak, had all the pictures it would hold; that the lake, at least, had no new ones to give me.

I have made you see in my grate-fire those many-peaked hills with the thousand cloud-shapes of sunrise and sunset. I have shown you the low dells where the hundred forms of fern and bracken nestle, and the autumn glory of russets and reds on hillside and hillock. You have peopled the island with many boys, sunbrowned and natty, tempest-tossed and naughty. You have had Nan at play and at work, in rose light, blue light, and the glorious carmine of autumn. But, my dear, let them all go, and hold for me the loveliest picture of them all.

Imagine, by the interlacing boughs of oaks and

maples Nature had formed a chapel which Giotto nor Michael Angelo might not copy. Imagine assembled in this chapel a band of singing boys, and a majestic, grand old man in robes of the Ascension. Imagine, dear, in their midst, St. Cecilia, of Raffael, not Dolce.

That, my dear, was the picture I caught, as coming through the trees a little late for the opening service, I made my way to the chapel.

Nan, clothed in her surplice, stood before the rustic altar, her chin raised and eyes upward as in the great Cecilia, playing that beautiful hymn from Stradella. The boys, lost in admiration for their friend and exalted by the occasion, were transfigured from human beings prone to mischief to angels. Oh that we had a Correggio to hold them fast on canvas. My Lewis looked a knight of the Holy Grail, Wolcott and Harry, cherubs of the San Sisto.

Nan played her hymn and St. Cecilia was submerged in the choir. The good Bishop preached as it seems he never can anywhere else. The boys were no longer animals. Each one was face to face with his own soul, and felt the touch of the spiritual world around him, and it seemed to

me as they rose to sing the anthem, their voices had a tone never heard before.

With the recessional the boys filed once more through the woods to meet Marian and her father, and Mr. Morton and Harold as his best man waited at the altar, as the boys took up once more a joyful song. How it rang through the trees!

Then I realized how good had been Marian's choice! Was ever a marriage more simple or more beautiful? When at last Count Lodoff with his master hand, led Nan's violin with his own in the wedding march, I rejoiced that my boys had seen and felt the beauty of this marriage service, unspoiled by the glitter of wealth or display.

A few friends and neighbors greeted the bride in the pavilion, and there a wedding breakfast was served, where the loving cup was something more than a hollow ceremony.

Can you find a more beautiful picture in that treasure-house?

Yours as ever,

H. P.

The boys had indeed fallen under the spell of the hour, but they were none the less

"Creatures not too good
For human nature's daily food,"

when once more in their own province.

To Marian, the camp seemed never so dear as when the boys rallied around Herbert with laugh and cheer.

It was the close of Herbert's work among them, if indeed it had not already closed with his accident; but to-day he was one of them again; seated in a huge chair lest his poor limb become weary, the boys clambering around him, he looked less the bridegroom than the tutor.

And when at last the boat came to carry them off, the rice and boots rained thick and fast.

The summer was over. For Marian a new life was beginning, and for Nan not less, for before her lay a life as untried and new as Marian's own, and would this all ever be the same again? Would another year bring her back to these dear compan-

ions, the same unspoiled child, girl friend? And the boys themselves? For a few, the path yet lay along the pleasant hedged roads of pure childhood; but for the many, new ways lay on to the great battlefield of active life, where each must fight his good fight.

Lewis surrounded with wealth, might go on through college to the pleasant paths of artist life; but all would not be easy for him even there. None knew better than Nan what snares lay in Lewis's path.

Steve, dreaming of good work as a worthy churchman, had already joined the University Settlement, where with Harold he was to learn to work for the struggling masses he must help to uplift.

Marshall, looking perhaps beyond the victories of his great college football team, saw in the vista a cherished goal, where, as a practising physician, he might have the

help of a strong, clear-eyed, well-rounded woman, who should be his wife. But

"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And one must have a clear vision to see beyond the struggle and disappointments of years to the accomplishment of youth's dreams. Much lies between, but this is sure, in whatever path their lives may lead, each and all of our Chicopee boys will do his duty, and Nan will be their help and friend.

For her — dreams are not yet, but there is action and usefulness where just now we may not follow her.

THE END.

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